

DREAMS AND MACHINES™

THE BROKEN STEPPES
- SETTING GUIDE -

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DREAMS & MACHINES - The Broken Steppes - Setting Guide

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CHAPTER 1

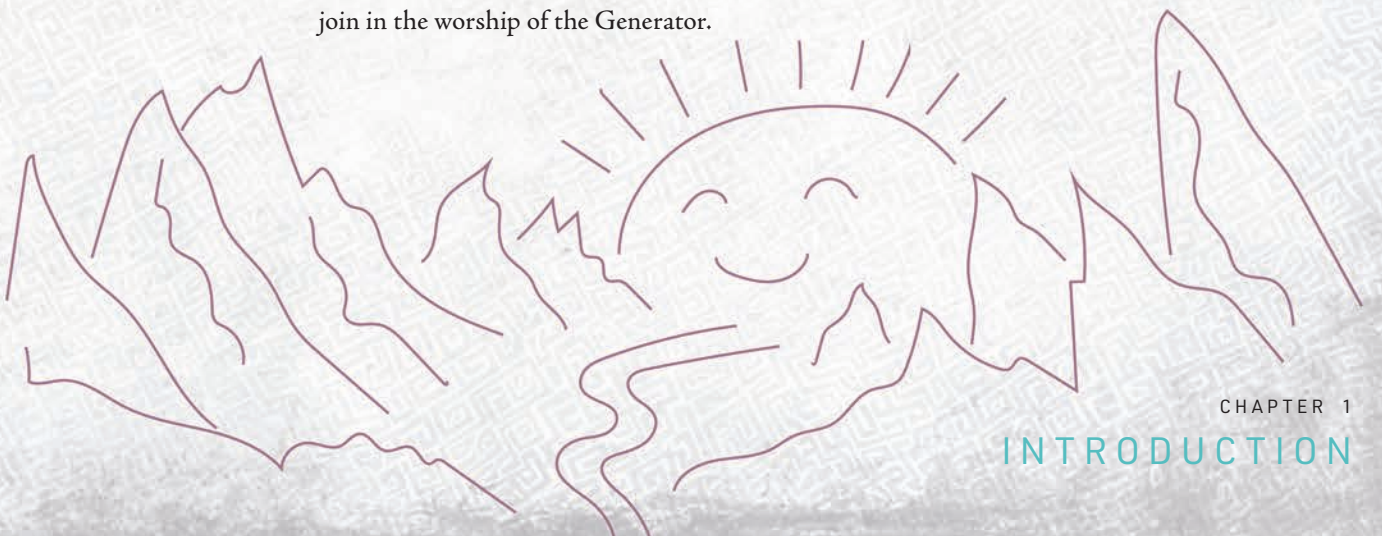
INTRODUCTION

Hello again!

Welcome to the *The Broken Steppes Setting Guide*, the second setting guide for the *Dreams and Machines* universe!

This book is for both players and gamemasters. For the enterprising GM, it contains a detailed overview of the **Surienta Simio region** of the Broken Steppes, including plenty of unique and exciting locations that could feature in adventures — meet the Flat Top-riding Spears of Highguard, discover the unique community living inside a hive of deadly Kornowasps, and uncover the fiery secrets of the abandoned city of Trisagasimio.

For players, there are new **GLIFs**, **talents**, and **equipment**, as well as expanded rules for **mounts and vehicles**. In addition to this, this book provides players with all the information they need to create your own **Conduit player character**. More commonly known amongst surface-dwellers as “Thralls”, Conduits have lived at odds with many of Evera Prime’s societies for years. Now, however, things are changing, and with a selection of Conduit-specific **origins**, **archetypes**, and **equipment**, players can create their own Conduit characters and join in the worship of the Generator.



In addition to all this, this book also contains brand new **settlement building rules**, so players and gamemasters can create permanent, customizable communities that they can grow into thriving societal hubs that forever leave a mark on Evera Prime. These rules also provide dozens of potential adventure seeds and plot hooks, and heaps of ways to introduce varied and diverse new characters to your ongoing campaign and bring your *Dreams and Machines* adventures to life.

In order to take full advantage of this setting guide and incorporate it into your journeys across Evera Prime, you will need to make sure you have a copy of the *Dreams and Machines Player's Guide*, and the *Dreams and Machines Gamemaster's Guide*.





CHAPTER 2

FROM THE DEPTHS

New friends...?

Feared and maligned by the majority of Everans, few people really know much about Thralls. They are boogeymen, the subject of rumor, speculation, and stories intended to scare unruly children into behaving.

The majority of Everans have never met a Thrall, and know them only by their dark reputation. Those who have met Thralls have likely done so during the Thralls' occasional surface raids, which are as brief as they are violent. These darkly-clad raiders, speaking in a strange and unknown language and carrying vicious-looking weapons, are regarded as being nearly as inhuman as the slumbering Wakers.

In truth, the Conduits — for “Thralls” is simply how Everans know them — are just as fearful and ignorant of the Everans.



CONDUIT HISTORY

The Conduits descend from those who fled the Builder War by taking shelter in the networks of transit tunnels, sewers, basements, and bunkers beneath the surface of Evera Prime. The leaders of these survivors, bearing neural interface implants that allowed them a degree of communication with machines, claimed to have been sent warnings and guidance from an A.I. which they referred to as “the Generator”. Given their success in finding not only shelters, but shelters which had necessary resources that allowed them to survive, there seemed to be enough truth in their claims that others flocked to them, believing that they had been chosen by — and had received guidance from — this intelligence.

From this point on, they came to regard themselves as the favored children of the Generator, given knowledge and purpose that would see them prosper so long as they followed the guidance they were given. They were the Conduits through which the Generator’s power flowed. Soon enough, that name stuck, and their settlements, outposts, and encampments became Nodes, pivotal points in the Generator’s design.

In the decades that followed, the Conduits exhausted the supplies they had originally discovered, and built new infrastructure to replace it. Again, the Generator seemed to grant insights to the Conduits’ leaders, helping them locate the resources they needed to establish clean water supplies, hydroponics farms, and locate the materials needed to build homes, tools, and many of the other things they would need to not only survive, but thrive. Over these generations, as the original leaders died and their implants passed on, the leaders of the Conduits slowly evolved into a priestly caste, receiving and interpreting the wisdom of the Generator and directing the Conduits of their community. These priests became the first Readers.

But it quickly became apparent that not everything they would need could be found beneath the surface, or at least not in sufficient quantities that would allow the Conduits to rebuild the world and prepare for the future the Generator had promised them. It became evident that their goals — and the goals of the Generator — could only be achieved by venturing to the surface.

The first scouting parties sent to the surface were the first Conduits to encounter the ruins of the Old World left behind by the War. The ruined world clashed with the stories passed down through generations of the technological golden age that had occurred previous to the Builder War, and for the first time, the Conduits felt anger. They felt wronged for what had been lost.

In time, they encountered other survivors living in the harsh light of the upside. The first Conduits to encounter surface-dwellers were a hunting party seeking to salvage technology from a ruined city, who clashed with a Spear hunting party who were pursuing a Waker. The accidental clash led to violence. Conduit historians claim that the bloodthirsty surface-dwellers struck the first blow. Spear oral histories claim that they were set upon by “Thralls of the Builder” while they hunted. Having been isolated from other humans for generations, the Conduits’ language was incomprehensible to the surfacers, and vice versa. Soon, Conduit scouts located surface settlements, basking in the sunlight. They saw people who had rejected the technological bounty of their forebears — and who rejected the wisdom and beneficence of the Generator.

They saw an enemy. The descendants of those who had allowed the War to happen — perhaps even those who caused the War, and who resisted the Generator’s plan. The Conduits’ anger had a target, but it was not a reckless anger, nor was it heedless of peril.

In the generations since, the Conduits have sought to avoid the surface-worlders where possible. Conduit scavenging parties move stealthily and try to go to places that surfacers do not venture. They only seek to raid settlements or attack travelers when necessary, or when commanded by a Reader following the instruction of the Generator (indeed “necessity” and “the Generator’s will” are often regarded as synonymous). Where surfacers have sought out or stumbled upon Nodes, entire communities will uproot themselves and relocate to somewhere safer, or even break up and separate to join other Nodes instead.

Over the decades, Conduit society has slowly begun to fragment. The Readers in different Nodes have begun to interpret the Generator's will in different ways; the differences beginning small and subtle, but growing over time. This has led to disagreements, rivalries, and even conflict between Nodes, and accusations of some nodes "malfunctioning" or having been "corrupted" by exposure to the surface-worlders.

The greatest of these schisms occurred only in the last few years, when numerous Nodes devoted themselves to the Dark City. Some claim that a scouting party discovered a stockpile of great abundance, containing not only food and materials, but also advanced weaponry and powerful technologies and access to a mighty stronghold above, where they encountered representatives of a great power who offered to make them mighty. Others claim that emissaries of the Dark City sought out several Nodes, offering great promises of unlimited resources and the power to achieve all of their desires. They claimed to be true emissaries of the Generator, who would elevate them to be like gods.

The truth is somewhere between. Agents of the Dark City had been observing the Conduits for some time, and found a way to intercept and alter the signals received

by Readers, sending false messages and causing those Readers to dispatch scouts and raiders to locations that suited the Dark City's agenda — this subversion resulted in scouts finding caches of supplies that had been left for them to discover, eventually luring entire Nodes into the Dark City's embrace.

Still, the Dark City's reach was less than they hoped. Only a few Readers' Diode Discs could be hacked, limiting how many could be influenced. Many Readers condemned the Dark City's promises as the works of a false Generator that would undermine and corrupt the Generator's true plan and the long work of the Conduits. A few Nodes, however, were tempted by these promises, and ventured to that stronghold city. Some of them have been seen since, but changed almost beyond recognition. These Dark Conduits, serving the Dark City and its mysterious Founders, are far more aggressive, violent, and cruel, and are far more prone to vicious raids against the surface. Surface-dwellers have little ability to distinguish between "Thralls" and "Dark City Thralls", and tend to regard them as all the same thing, heightening tensions between the surfacers and the Conduits. The Dark Conduits, however, are just as likely to raid Conduit Nodes as they are surface settlements.



THE WILL OF THE GENERATOR

Conduits revere a mysterious intelligence they call the Generator. Whilst they are unsure just what the Generator is, Conduits appoint Readers to interpret the signals and messages sent by the Generator. Whilst there is no uniform practice in how Conduits appoint Readers, as it varies from place to place, to be a Reader is to be one of the most important figures in a Conduit society: their words and actions often guide their communities towards the future.

Readers receive messages from the Generator via the Diode Discs implanted in their bodies. Sometimes, these messages are as clear as a voice ringing in their minds;

other times, they are little more than the hiss of static. The truth, however, is that these signals are often sent by fragments of the Builder, and the strength of the signal is determined by how close the Reader is to a fragment of the Builder. Intent on rebuilding itself, the Builder directs Conduit Readers to its own ends, often promising resources in exchange for something it needs to continue to recreate itself.

What's more, Diode Discs aren't immune to tampering from other nefarious parties, such as the Dark City. As such, it takes a sharp mind — and a very strong will — to be the master of a Diode Disc.

Very recently, scouts and scavenging parties from a few Nodes have observed surface-dwellers and these Dark Conduits clashing, and have started to wonder if, perhaps, the surface-dwellers are not so corrupt or malign as they had believed. Peaceful contact is yet to happen, but perhaps the danger of a common foe will see Conduit and surfer meet in good faith — though there may be too much bad blood on either side to allow for true peace.

QUALAN

The Conduits' long isolation, the technical jargon used by the cybernetically-enhanced leaders who became the original Readers, and the needs of their subterranean life, have resulted in the development of Qualan, the distinctive language of Conduits. Though it shares a common root with the modern Everan language, the two have diverged enough that a speaker of Qualan cannot be understood by a speaker of Everan. So far, no surface-dweller has ever learned to speak Qualan, though a number of Conduits have learned Everan to better study the surface-worlders.

Naturally, the Conduits do not actually use the terms Conduit, Generator, Node, and so on. Rather, they have their own Qualan terms that are roughly equivalent to these words.



LIFE BENEATH THE SURFACE

The typical Node is a collection of chambers and the tunnels connecting them, which have been secured by its inhabitants and made safe from subterranean predators and outside aggressors. The most important chambers will also be the most secure; these are normally the vital supply stores and valuable infrastructure, such as water and food sources. Surrounding that will be craft workshops and tradespeople, and then the dwellings of other inhabitants. By tradition, the homes of warriors and those who routinely leave the Node to scavenge or raid will be on the outer edge, as this also allows them to be the first line of defense against intruders. The homes of families with children are located closer to the center, where they are more protected.

The culture of a Conduit Node varies depending on the Node's location and history, but there are a number of commonalities. Nodes are wary of outsiders, but fiercely loyal to their own kin and community. They are bound to each other both in immediate survival and the grand plan of the Generator, and they are generous of their time and resources when dealing with another of the same Node, and cautiously optimistic when dealing with Conduits from other Nodes. Only severe divides between Nodes can sour this spirit of community, and surface-dwellers and Dark City Conduits are excluded from it entirely. Nodes also prize patience as a virtue; the Generator's plan

is a long and winding path, which will take many steps to walk, and many parables common across Conduit Nodes caution against reckless haste, teaching instead that being overeager to triumph can result in disaster.

A common feature of Conduits are wire wraps. These complex woven patterns of wires are worn by every Conduit, wrapped around their limbs and torsos. Each Conduit's wire wrap is unique, with a distinct pattern of twists and coils which expands over time with their deeds and exploits. As they enter adolescence, a young Conduit receives their first wires, receiving additional loops, twists, and coils of wire at significant life milestones after that. To the trained eyes of Conduits, the lives and deeds of their kin can be read in their wires.

At first, these initial wires are left separate from one another, and it is considered presumptuous to link these wires into a circuit. Any adolescent Conduit may seek a challenge to "earn their wires", gaining the right to close the circuit and be treated as an adult. These challenges often involve undertaking a risky mission for a Reader, often acting as a scout to observe the area of an upcoming raid or scavenging run. Returning successfully brings honor, acclaim, and status. Not all Conduits seek out such a challenge, even well into adulthood; they will become adults in the eyes of their Node in time, but those who "earn their wires" can attain such status early.

CONDUIT NAMES

A Conduit name is a combination of letters and numbers, which originated as an identification code containing the owner's first initial, the beginning of their surname, date of birth, and a few other pieces of information. Over the generations, it has shifted somewhat from this, and different trends have arisen in different Nodes.

The common form is three letters and a four-digit number, sometimes followed by a suffix for notable roles within a community. In daily life, most address one another by one or more nicknames or abbreviated names. The first part is normally a collection of three letters that can be pronounced easily.

The specific meanings of the numbers are the element

that varies most: some Nodes maintain the oldest tradition of using date of birth (where October 22nd would be 1022 or 2210, as different Nodes have used different orders), while others do a count of the number of people born to that Node, or the count of a number of days since a specific historical event, such as the founding of that Node. In short: if you are creating a Conduit character, pick whatever numbers you want, and use any explanation you wish for it.

Suffixes for specific roles and levels of status in a Node are not universal, but some important Conduits may have them. It's common for these to be two to three letters, or a letter and a number, and each Node has its own traditions for this.

CONDUIT LOCATIONS

Due to how their society has developed since the Builder War, Conduits have learned to live in places that many would think to be uninhabitable. In truth, this speaks to their tough and hardy natures, as well as the relentless drive that Conduits possess, and their will to survive in spite of all the odds stacked against them.

NODE WP/440

Located closer to the surface than most Nodes, and around one hundred and fifty miles to the north of New Mossgrove, WP/440 is a fortified and defensible settlement intended to repel and deter any surfacers who might seek to venture below. It also functions as a muster point for scavenging runs and raids headed to the surface.

THE HISTORY

The Node originally formed around a pre-War water processing plant, tapping a nearby mountain stream and feeding the purified water into a network of pipes that ran to local towns and facilities. The Conduits who founded WP/440 located the plant about twenty years after the end of the War, and immediately worked to secure it, driving out the wildlife that had nested within the surrounding tunnels. They then sealed off most of the pipes, keeping the water for themselves. The value of a limitless supply of water means that the Node's inhabitants are unwilling to relocate, instead fortifying their position.

Since then, it has grown and thrived considerably.





THE PLACE

WP/440 provides a constant supply of clean, pure water to several other nearby Nodes, trading this bountiful resource in exchange for raw materials, tools, and the aid of additional warriors to maintain the defenses. As one of the rare Nodes that cannot relocate, WP/440 maintains a larger contingent of warriors and raiders in its population, including ones loaned from other Nodes. Indeed, it has become a common tradition amongst a number of Nodes to send a small contingent of warriors carrying supplies to aid WP/440 for a few months at a time to pay for the constant supply of water.

The large contingent of warriors — both local and those sent as payment for water — are an invaluable part of WP/440's survival. The location of the settlement near to the surface, and its position drawing from a mountain stream, makes it vulnerable to drawing surface-dweller attention. The Node remains secret from the surface-dwellers for the time being — at least as far as its inhabitants know — but it has been found multiple

times over the decades, remaining secret only because no witnesses have been allowed to survive to tell the tale. The Node's Readers and Squadrunners know that it is only a matter of time before the Node is discovered by the surface-dwellers, but they cannot afford to abandon this vital resource.

Surface-dwellers are not the only danger here. Numerous wild animals are drawn to a source of clean water, and not easily deterred by the Node's defenders. Regular hunting parties and beast-handlers try to keep the wildlife manageable, as well as providing the Node with regular supplies of meat, venom, hides, and chitin.

Water Processing Plant

The center of WP/440 is a large plant for processing and purifying water to make it safe for human use. It draws upon a number of sources of water within the nearby mountains. Originally built to supply water to a number of towns and facilities in the surrounding area, the plant was designed to run itself with minimal outside intervention beyond basic maintenance, and it continued to function long after the War.

Defensive Lines

WP/440's defenses have grown over the decades as the Node has established itself, and the potential danger to it has become more evident.

The tunnels surrounding the perimeter of the Node are filled with defensive traps, ranging from surveillance hides where sentries can covertly observe anyone who approaches, to labyrinths of dead-end tunnels and false doors to entrap the unwary, and cunningly concealed tripwires and ambush sites to cut down enemies who get past the outer lines. While some of these defenses are fixed in place, others can be rearranged periodically, in case an outsider learns the way to bypass them.

Small groups of sentries and scouts are posted at the outer defenses, using smaller, concealed passages to move to and from the outer lines to the interior of the Node. In addition to watching for intruders, they guide legitimate arrivals — such as returning raiding parties from the surface — into the Node itself.

THE PEOPLE

Devotion to the Generator's plan is central to life in WP/440, and the Node's Readers are often very strict in their interpretations of the Generator's will and their judgment of their fellow Conduits. Yet WP/440 is also surprisingly cosmopolitan by Conduit standards, practicing open and regular trade with other Nodes, and even accepting outsider Conduits into their community for months at a time.

Furthermore, it is common for those who've earned their wires to also learn to speak Everan, and many of those with their wires open also learn some of the language just through exposure to it. The Node's proximity to the surface has meant that studying the speech and traditions of the surface-dwellers have become priorities, and the Node's scholars and scouts have more knowledge of surface-dwelling groups and their cultures. This often leads to warriors from other Nodes bringing some of this knowledge back to their own communities when they finish their season in WP/440.

Conduit names within WP/440 count the days since the Node was founded, around 20 years after the War. Once this count of days exceeded nine thousand, nine hundred and ninety-nine, the tradition continued to use the last four digits from that count in new names. The current count of days was 65,732 at the start of the year.

Conclave of Readers

As befits a community with the size and status of WP/440, it has a council of five Readers who collaborate to interpret the signals they receive from the Generator. The most senior of these is SLA4530, referred to as "Sela" by those close to her. A tall, striking woman in her late fifties, SLA4530 has not left the Node in many years, but still bears the scars of a raid-gone-wrong from her youth, which ended poorly when it stumbled upon a Prowlcat lair.

SLA4530 is a deeply cautious woman, who has been interpreting the Generator's signals for decades. In her interpretations, she errs on the side of safety and patience, and cautions the rest of the council to do likewise. In the last few years, she has been challenged by the young, recently implanted Reader MRN9130-RDR ("Meron"), who is an outspoken firebrand with a growing following amongst the warriors of the Node.

Water-Keepers

The water processing plant at the heart of the Node is central to its existence and its status, and it is regarded as a vital part of the Node's place in the Generator's grand schematic. To this end, WP/440 has a specialized cadre of technicians and engineers who maintain the plant and keep it functioning. Their knowledge is maintained by generations of ritual and institutional knowledge passed down by word of mouth from master to apprentice, as well as the guidance of the Readers.

Within WP/440, only the Readers are regarded with greater respect and reverence than the Water-Keepers. The Water-Keepers are currently led by UTM8212, a gregarious middle-aged man who insists that everyone call him Two-Twelve. While not the eldest and most senior of the Water-Keepers, he is the most knowledgeable about the workings of the water plant, and the one most practiced at speaking for his fellows.

First Squadrunner

The overall leader of the warriors and raiders dwelling within WP/440 is customarily known as First Squadrunner. This is a demanding role, coordinating the defense of the Node, organizing scavenging and raiding parties, training young warriors, and working with the warriors on loan from other Nodes. This requires working closely with the Reader Conclave as well, as these matters are deeply entwined with the Generator's plan.

The current First Squadrunner is a grizzled old warrior, RIG1277, whose skin is stained gray from decades of applying ash and moss warpaint. He views the outside world with a mixture of cynicism and pragmatism; he has little time for the strangeness of surface-dwellers or the idiosyncrasies of other Nodes, but if he finds some valid tool, tactic, or strategy which will help him defend his Node, he will absolutely employ it. His right leg is a prosthetic salvaged from a raid on a Spear encampment several years ago, and his personal arsenal contains dozens of weapons taken from enemies during raids.



THE STORIES

The WP/440 Node is, in many ways, a fortified frontier town sitting between the underground domain of Conduits and the surface world of Everans. The player characters can come across the Conduits of WP/440 in a number of ways:

- While searching for a source of water, or tracking some wild animals, the PCs stumble upon a hunting party from WP/440.
- Settlements and foraging parties in the area have encountered an increasing number of Thrall raids recently. Evidence suggests that there may be a base of some kind nearby... which there is: WP/440.
- While recovering a cache of valuable resources, the PCs meet a group of Thralls seeking the same resources. Strangely for Thralls — or “Conduits”, as these ones call themselves — these ones seem to understand Everan.

THE PROCESSION

Deep underground lies the remnants of a pre-War tramway that connected a number of remote surface facilities scattered through the Horseshoe Mountains in the Broken Steppes, transporting personnel and supplies swiftly and safely without needing to traverse the surface. In the aftermath of the Builder War, with the surface outposts abandoned, the tramway fell into disuse. Many years later, however, it was discovered by a group of Conduits, who now travel around the tramway, living within the tram carriages themselves.

THE HISTORY

Before the War, the Horseshoe Mountains were home to a collection of climate monitoring stations, isolated research laboratories, and other facilities that were served well by being located high up and far away from large population centers. In order to support these isolated facilities, an extensive tramway was burrowed into the rock of the mountains, with numerous subterranean storage vaults and supply depots, allowing personnel and supplies to be moved between the facilities in the mountains and the towns and villages in the foothills around and the region beyond.

Out of necessity, while the tram was automated, operating on a simple programmed control system, it was not linked to any higher AI systems: being buried so far beneath the mountains, signals from any other networks would be unable to reach the tramway. As a result, when the Builder rebelled and the facilities were abandoned, the tram system continued to run by itself on schedule.

Many decades after the War, a hunting party of Conduits looting the ruins of one of the old towns discovered the old, abandoned tramway, finding the plethora of supply depots contained within. Within a matter of months, an entire Conduit Node had moved into the tramway and made it their home.

THE PLACE

The Procession is the tramway, the trams, and the various locales along it, though the majority of the Node’s inhabitants dwell on the trams themselves.

Two ten-carriage trams, running in opposite directions along the tramway loop. Smaller groups reside in repurposed storage vaults and supply depots spread along the tram line. The trams themselves maintain the same schedule as they were programmed to before the War, though the long years have resulted in the trams becoming somewhat slower and less reliable as age and wear has taken a toll on their mechanisms.

The Trams

Tram A runs clockwise around the tramway, while Tram B runs counterclockwise. Typically, the two come alongside one another only a couple of times in the space of a week, given both the deterioration of their mechanisms and the large loop they are covering, which encompasses all of the loop of the Horseshoe Mountains and then extends several hundred kilometers to the south in a rough oval shape.

Tram A is the more functional of the two trams in operation within The Procession. The trams themselves run off of industrial-grade kinetic batteries beneath each carriage, which are charged by a mixture of the motion of the carriages and the induction charging pads at each tram stop, which themselves are fed by a power plant deep beneath The Procession.



The fore carriage of each tram is fitted with detection systems for safe operation of the tram, and these carriages have been converted into both shrines for religious ceremonies and the chambers of the Node's Readers. Under the mountain where signals struggle to reach, the guidance of the Generator is gained by communing with the holy apparatus of the trams themselves.

The remainder of the carriages have been refurbished to serve a variety of purposes: each tram once contained a mixture of passenger carriages and cargo containers, and now contain bunkrooms, healer's clinics, kitchens, shrines, meeting spaces, and other locations that can be mobile.

The Supply Depots

There are two large supply depots spaced evenly around the loop of The Procession, which once acted as the main hubs of any goods and valuable supplies to be distributed throughout the mountainside facilities. The first is in the Horseshoe Mountains' northern range, whilst the second is to the south, beyond the Geyser's Vale. Originally, each was a collection of warehouses and a distribution center, intended to ensure that the facilities above were well-supplied for several years. These supplies ranged from spare parts for equipment, to raw materials for construction and manufacturing, to a supply of clean water, and a sizable food store — though much of the food in storage was long-life ration packs for emergencies, rather than more perishable fare. Each also once had an Industrial Atoma device to supplement these supplies.

Since the Conduits settled within The Procession, most of these supplies have been used, and the Atoma devices remain dormant and untouched: there are few Weavers amongst Conduits, few enough that most Conduits never encounter a Weaver. The supply depots have instead been converted to serve the Node's needs, with warehouses converted into

hydroponic farms, workshops, and homes for families, the infirm, and the elderly.

The Tunnels

The tunnels that make up the tramway are old and abandoned, never intended to be traversed by people. There's no lighting and little in the way of ventilation. Pre-War, the maintenance would have been handled by robots, but they haven't functioned in a very long time, leaving the tunnels to become dangerous and increasingly unstable. Several minor branches and utility tunnels — away from the main tracks — have partially or totally collapsed, and the potential for a collapse in the main tunnel is something the Conduits of the Node fears.

Similarly, the condition of the rails has deteriorated since the War, with worn, rusted, or corroded patches that slow the trams and make their passage more difficult.

Efforts have been made to send workers into the tunnels — often venturing out from various stops along the loop — to try and fix crumbling tunnels and replace or repair damaged rails. Some of this has been successful, but there are whispers amongst the Node's populace that it's only a matter of time until a disaster changes their entire way of life.

THE PEOPLE

The Node has a large population, split between the trams and the depots, and divides are starting to form within the community.

At the top of the Node are the Sages — RHJ1027 and VRN1631. These are the foremost Readers of the Node, each of whom presides over one of the trams. RHJ1027 is a cunning, cynical man whose long years leading Tram A have made him wealthy and powerful. He is more pragmatic than spiritual, and has developed a considerable understanding of the practical workings of the trams' guidance systems, and has even been able to override their control systems on a few occasions. He has pushed for increasing rationing of

scarce resources in the name of caution and prudence, with his favored followers receiving the benefits. VRN1631 is more devout, and deeply suspicious of RHJ1027's ways, and both her generosity and her fervent sermons keep Tram B's warriors and raiders eager. Tram B has won significant support in the congregations in the depots.

The population of the trams are mostly those who hunt, raid, scout, and scavenge, and one can only earn a spot upon one of the trams once they have earned their wires. The mobility of the trams can carry these Conduits towards their destinations, and the passage of the trams and the guidance of the Generator are seen as one and the same. A group venturing out from their tram will depart for days at a time, and return to where they departed, seeking to return to their ever-moving home as it makes a scheduled stop. When aboard the trams, these Conduits spend their time training, recovering from injuries, and maintaining or repairing their equipment.

The depots are somewhat isolated from these day-to-day activities. They are the maintainers, those whose wires are unbound, who grow and prepare the food, who raise and teach the children, and who provide the unsung foundations of the community, and whose lot in life has often been overlooked or dismissed in the tension between the Readers. These maintainers are represented by a handful of notables, including MAR3004 — a single mother of a young child, who has come to some prominence by speaking out against the rhetoric from RHJ1027. She finds conflict with RMS0618, a zealous, harsh old woman who oversees the food stores and distributes the rations — her system of rationing favors those aboard the trams, perceiving them as the instruments of the Generator's will and thus more worthy than others.

One particular oddity of The Procession is the composition of the ashen mixture which its inhabitants cover themselves in when venturing

to the surface. The more artificial environs have forced them to adapt to using different materials, and the resulting mixture has a ruddy, rust-like color than the more common metallic gray.

THE STORIES

The Procession is a community divided, but also one with considerable reach due to the tram system they inhabit, and this means that they can be found a lot further from their homes than many Conduits. The player characters can come across the Conduits of The Procession in a number of ways:

- While searching the ruins of one of the towns or villages around the Horseshoe Mountains, the PCs can encounter a band of Thralls who seem to emerge from nowhere, or who seem to vanish without a trace as they pass. The inhabitants of The Procession know all the hiding places and concealed routes into and out of these ruined settlements.
- The PCs hear talk of a number of raids by Thralls across a wide area, yet with similar markings, rust-colored coverings, and other signs that they may be the same group, despite the distances involved.





THE WEB

The Web is located in the north-west of the High Plateau, within a vast, machine-cut cavern excavated by automated machine-miners before the War. The Node earns its name from the intricate tangle of cables, platforms, support beams, and other structures suspended within the middle of the cavern, hanging over a luminous lake of chemical runoff and slurry that fills the base of the pit beneath. The machines long ago vacated the cavern, the only sign of their departure the bore holes in the cavern ceiling that allow air and rainwater to enter the chamber. The cavern is constantly humming with the harmonies of the wires creaking as the inhabitants make their way around the Web.



THE HISTORY

The cavern was formed due to demand for rare mineral deposits that were particularly abundant in the region. At the direction of the Builder — over a decade before the War began — automated mining drones descended into the ground, burrowing deep enough to begin breaking down the bedrock and extracting the mineral bounty within. Tirelessly, they had soon excavated a significant hollow, yet it was deep enough that there were few signs of it on the surface above. Less than a year before the War, the cavern was abandoned, the mine having been exhausted.

Some seventy years after the War, the subsidence of several nearby service tunnels that Conduits had used to move between distant Nodes and hunting grounds led to enterprising scouts breaking through into the edge of the cavern. The base of the cavern, while dangerous, contained valuable resources that the Builder's drones hadn't been interested in, as well as the wreckage of old, damaged robots, and the industrious Conduits soon moved in. At first, they camped in nearby tunnels — and broke through into the cavern from other nearby passages — before starting to build within the cavern itself, introducing support struts and long reels of polyalloy cabling to make it easier to climb to and from the bountiful sump below. Over time, these constructions grew more ambitious and more complex, and as the Node grew, the makeshift camps in the tunnels moved into more permanent dwellings suspended on the metallic web in the cave.

In recent years, it's become clear that the resources fished from the cavern sump have begun to dwindle, forcing the Node's inhabitants to rely more and more on risky surface raids to support themselves. A year ago, the Node's eldest Reader HGU0404 received a vision from the Generator of a distant depot with rich resources and plentiful food that would solve the Web's needs...but it would be the work of many hands and require months of travel, including long stretches overland. Many were eager to carry out the Generator's will and undertake this trek, despite the peril. After much public debate, almost two thirds of the Node's inhabitants departed, leaving only a relative few — those who were skeptical of the vision, or who would be unable to make such a journey — to remain in the safety of the Node. For a while, at least, the reduced population means that they need fewer resources to sustain themselves, but their situation is precarious.

THE PLACE

The Web is a large and complex settlement, and navigating the tangle of cables, gantries, platforms, and suspended buildings is difficult for anyone who isn't a local. Newcomers arriving to trade with the Node stick to the periphery, near the cavern walls and tunnel entrances, for fear of getting lost. There are solid pathways from one section to the next, allowing carts and large groups to move easily along suspended ramps, but the younger and more able-bodied inhabitants tend to clamber along cables, ropeways, and ladders, scrambling with startling ease. There is also a network of suspended baskets of varying sizes for transporting goods around, and the larger of these conveyances are used for moving people around as well.

The Web is a surprisingly noisy place, the cavern constantly abuzz with the sound of the wires and cables vibrating from the movement of the inhabitants. The locals are used to this noise, and barely notice it during an average day, yet they've developed a keen awareness for abnormalities in that background noise, for changes in the sounds of the Web might indicate danger or potential disaster.

The Upper Web

The upper section of the Web is mostly homes, hydroponic gardens, market spaces, and other spaces intended to make the Node habitable and hospitable, along with a few defensible positions in case of attack. The majority of tunnels in the walls connect to these upper areas, and the tunnels themselves contain sentry positions and armed outposts intended to ward off intruders.

At the lowest part of what is normally agreed upon as being the Upper Web are the Reader's quarters, connecting to a shrine where the Reader attends to the spiritual needs of the Node's population. The Reader's quarters are suspended upon a lattice of cables, to give them an awareness that extends across the entire Node, sensing every vibration like a spider at the center of its web, or the Generator at the center of its network.

In the last year, the majority of the remaining population has moved into the safer and more hospitable Upper Web, occupying abandoned homes and bringing the now-smaller community into closer proximity to one another. The Reader's quarters have remained empty since the mass exodus led by HGU0404.

The Lower Web

The lower sections of the Node are reserved for industry, containing workshops and processing facilities for the raw materials dredged from the sump below. Aside from these, the other main locale here is a large plate — constructed over many years from salvaged and traded metals — which has been used as a drill ground for training warriors, and as a gathering place for the wider community.

In the year since the mass exodus, most of the remaining inhabitants of the Lower Web have relocated to the more comfortable dwellings in the Upper Web, further from the slurry below. A few stubborn holdouts remain in the Lower Web, and many still travel down to the Lower Web for work, but they no longer dwell in the shacks next to these workspaces.

The Sump

At the base of the cavern, beneath the web, lies a thick soup of mineral slurry, scrap technology from broken drones, and rainwater that's poured in from the vent shafts in the cavern roof. The resulting mixture, settling and reacting over time, is a toxic morass that softly illuminates the cavern with a blue radiance. The slurry mixture has some valuable trace materials and chemical mixtures that can be collected, sifted, and processed for crafting or trade. Only the most advanced technologies Conduits use include these materials, and other Nodes often trade for them at the direction of their Readers, suggesting that the Generator has some larger plan for their use.

More common, however, is “fishing”, where large polyalloy wire nets are used to dredge the sump for the wreckage of technology that fell into it when the cavern was being mined, and for sections of the Web's own structure that collapsed and fell in long ago. There is also a modest industry in harvesting the mutant fungus that has grown around the edge of the sump. Most of them are toxic, and the production and trade of fungal poisons helps the Node, but a few rare examples have potent medicinal properties when processed correctly.

After decades of constant work, the sump's bounty has started to noticeably diminish, leading to the challenges the Node has faced recently, and the mass exodus arranged by the old Reader.

THE PEOPLE

The Web's dwindling populace are the eclectic remnants of a once-thriving community, and the Node has spent the last year struggling to find a new equilibrium to allow their society to function.

Their faith shaken by recent events, and unwilling to trust a singular voice to guide them, the Node is currently lacking a formal leader. The Node's remaining Diode Disc was instead wired into the Web's structure itself, and individuals seek to connect with it to find the Generator's counsel on a more personal basis. This isn't widely known to Conduits from other Nodes, who might see this as a heretical practice.

The nearest thing to an actual leader the Web currently has is BAK0117, a young man who felt that it was more important to remain and stand for those who were left behind. Having been training as a healer, BAK0117 had only earned his wires months before the exodus, and he is the only member of his family to stay in the Web, but his personal beliefs couldn't countenance abandoning his home and his community based on the Reader's visions.

The bulk of the population are parents with children, the elderly, the disabled, and a few young rebels or those with a strong sense of attachment to their home. There aren't many workers remaining, but the demand for their labor is lessened by the reduced population, so the Node is just about surviving for now.

There are still a handful of “fishers” who dredge the sump for valuables, and farmers of the fungi on the sump's edge and the edible lichen cultivated in suspended grow-pods dangling beneath the Web. KAL0319 is the oldest representative of the former group, an eccentric old man with countless wild stories from his more adventurous youth and a cabin full of bizarre trophies to match. The latter group are led by BAR0703, a woman who resents her necessary position and the fact that she'd been too ill to leave with the exodus when it departed. She remains mainly because she doesn't know what else to do now, even if she doesn't much care for the duties she's inherited.

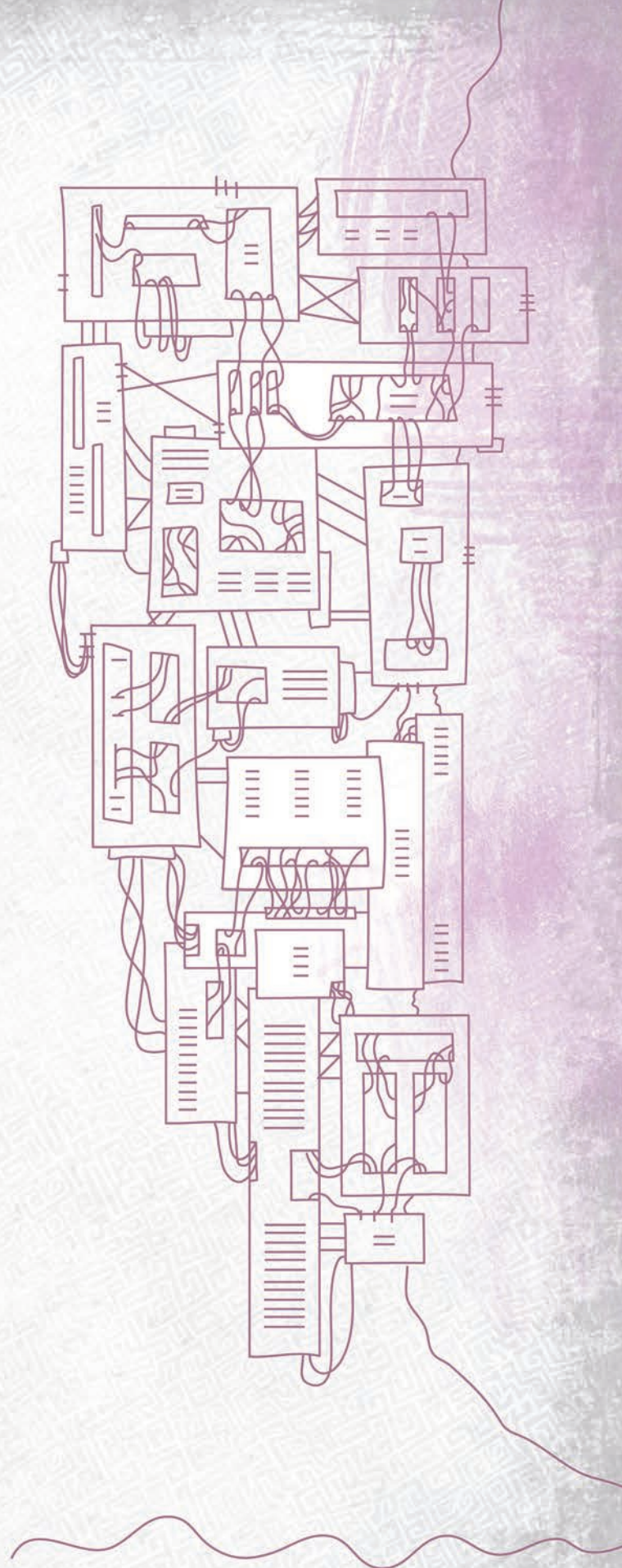
The Node's warriors mostly departed with the exodus, leaving few skilled fighters or scouts, and FEO1012 — who had previously served the Node's lead Squadrunner as a quartermaster and logistics expert — leads the remaining defence force only because he's the last person left to do it. He's done an admirable job building what he can of the Web's defenders, but they're still a pale reflection of what they were.

The last of the Node's notables is their lead Tech and architect, HGI0929. They had spent their life designing and constructing expansions and improvements to the Web's structure, and were being trained to become one of the Web's next Readers, but never completed their training before HGU0404 had their vision and led the exodus. HGI0929 donated the Diode Disc that would have been theirs to the community as a whole, connecting it to the Web itself.

THE STORIES

The Web is an unusual mining town with a distinctive style, ideal for showing Conduit player characters how different Nodes adapt to their environments and circumstances. The exodus provides different options for Everan PCs to encounter them.

- The PCs hear rumors of a large caravan of Thralls moving through the region, travelling overground where they cannot travel underground. Nobody is entirely sure where they're going or where they came from, but there are too many of them to completely pass notice, and someone might figure out their origin.
- A group of Grabbers searching across the High Plateau discover the vents above the cavern, or find tunnels in the vicinity that lead down to the Web. Whether curious about the location, or wary of the Thralls found within, news quickly gets back to the Grabbers' home.
- An area known for occasional encounters with Thrall raiders and scavengers has had little or no encounters in the last year. Nearby communities have grown increasingly bold and curious about the places they were previously wary of, as the threat of Thralls seems to have diminished... which could lead them to stumble upon the now-vulnerable Web.



CONDUIT CHARACTERS

Using the rules found over the next selection of pages, players will be able to create their own Conduit player characters. Be sure to refer to the information on character creation available in the *Player's Guide* (p. 93) for further guidance.

NEW ORIGIN: CONDUIT

Known to upsiders as Thralls, Conduits are those who dwell in the tunnels, caverns, and bunkers beneath the surface of the world, sheltering there at the direction of the intelligence that guides them: “the Generator”. Distrustful of those who live on the surface, Conduits try to avoid venturing topside, instead relying on the preserved supplies and sustainable infrastructure of their villages, called Nodes. However, these supplies are not always enough, and Conduits are driven to journey above to claim that which they lack.

Long generations of isolation, and the traditions of their culture and religion, have separated Conduits from Everans and other surface-dwellers, to the point where mutual communication is difficult at best, and most encounters are hostile. The Conduits fear the upsiders, while the surface-dwellers view the Conduits as enslaved to the same force that corrupted the Wakers and caused the War. Opportunities for peaceful contact are rare.

Unlike many upsiders, Conduits revere technology and the world before. Their religious leaders tell them that they are the chosen survivors of the end of the Old World, and that the Generator favors them above all others. Further, they are taught that one day, if they are patient and devoted, they will return to the world above to rebuild a utopia where they will live in harmony with technology. Each command from their leaders is another small step along that path.

While they revere technology, Conduits know little about it. Such secrets are for a select few, mainly Readers — the Conduits’ priesthood who convey messages from the Generator and guide each Node.

- **Truth:** The character gains the *Conduit Truth*.
- **Attributes:** The character’s starting Attributes are: Might 7, Quickness 6, Insight 6, Resolve 7.
- **Skills:** The character’s starting Skills are Move 1, Fight 2, Sneak 1, Talk 1, Operate 1, Study 1, Survive 2.
- **Tech Level:** The character has a starting Tech Level of 1. Conduits can always use Conduit-specific items and ignore their Tech Level.
- **Spirit:** The character’s Spirit Pool is increased by +2.
- **Supply Points:** The character’s Supply Points are unchanged. A Conduit’s Supply Points can be replenished from any source and can be used to create both natural and technological items.
- **Special Abilities:** The character has the **Wireclad** and **Outsider** abilities, plus either **Deadly Proficiencies** or **Tomorrow’s Problem**.

Conduits are spooky!

Conduits hide themselves from Wakers using a special paste of ash and metal filings.



Conduits use electrospears - just like my Spear friends!

Wire wraps!



SPECIAL ABILITY: WIRECLAD

Conduits wear a complex pattern of wires wrapped around their body as a sign of social standing and devotion. Many wear their wires loose and disconnected, but those who have proven themselves may wear a complete circuit, and it demonstrates an inner strength, ambition, curiosity, or devotion. Along with thick robes and coverings of ash and metal filings, the wire wraps also help conceal their presence from machine sensors.

The intricate mesh of your wire wraps provides you with Protection 1 if you are not wearing any other armor. This is ignored by attacks with the *Breaker* quality. Further, whenever a machine attempts to take an action against you, such as an attack, it must spend 1 Threat before it does so.

Finally, certain items of Conduit technology connect to your wire wraps, and cannot be used by anyone without this ability. This also allows you to use **wire wrap** talents.

SPECIAL ABILITY: OUTSIDER

You are alien and foreign to surface-dwellers, and were raised to speak the distinctive language of your people, only learning surface-speak later in life.

When you enter a settlement of surface-dwellers (Everans, Archivists, Dreamers, Spears, or Rivers), add 1 to Threat, as your presence among them causes tension. Further, add 1 to the Complication range of any Talk Skill Test made with those other than other Conduits, to represent the risk of miscommunication.

SPECIAL ABILITY: DEADLY PROFICIENCIES

Conduits are trained from a young age to hone their skill with weapons, poison, and raiding tactics.

When you succeed at an attack with a Conduit-only weapon, you score 1 bonus Momentum. This Momentum must be spent to improve that attack, and may not be saved.

SPECIAL ABILITY: TOMORROW'S PROBLEM

The path to the promised future is a long and winding one, and what problems and perils cannot be overcome today might be overcome tomorrow.

When you're in a dangerous situation, such as a combat scene, you may add 2 Threat to declare a retreat. If you do so, you and any allies who can hear you regain Spirit equal to your **Survive** Skill, but anyone who accepts this Spirit must make a genuine effort to withdraw from the fighting.

CONDUIT ARCHETYPES

Conduit characters can use any of the normal archetypes available in the *Dreams and Machines Player's Guide* or the *Emerta-Valo Setting Guide*, as well as the two Conduit-specific advanced archetypes presented below. We recommend that players who are new to the world of *Dreams and Machines* familiarise themselves with the basic archetypes before having a go with advanced archetypes.

As they exist outside of the economy of the surface world, Conduit characters do not begin play with any coin; they receive an equivalent quantity of scards instead (p. 108). Conduit characters may select Conduit weapons instead of the weapons listed for their archetype.

Conduit Fixers are not so worldly as those of the surface. They travel between different Nodes, facilitating coordination and cooperation between allied communities, or negotiating peace between ones that have become hostile to one another. However, many also learn the language of the upsiders to better learn their secrets.

Conduit Gatherers often accompany raiding parties, though normally as scouts and surveyors rather than as warriors. They also search the tunnels and transitways of the underground, hunting for resources that could sustain existing Nodes or become the heart of new ones.

Conduit Grabbers are similar to Gatherers in some ways, but often venture to the surface alone or in small groups on special missions directed by Readers. They're trusted to operate independently for long periods of time, despite the perils of the surface.

Conduit Guardians are commonplace, as warrior training is highly valued by Conduits. They form the backbone of raiding parties, and each Node has a defense force of warriors to protect it from rivals.

Conduit Mediators are teachers and guides, often second only to Readers as figures of leadership and respect in their communities. Many aid a Reader and study under them, passing their wisdom on to the rest of their Node. Many go on to become Readers in their own right.

Conduit Techs are few, as Readers often have a greater understanding of technology due to their connection to the Generator. Still, they do exist, often aiding Readers in the practical aspects of their work, and constructing the tools used by the rest of a Node.

WIRE WRAP TALENTS

Certain Conduit-specific talents are noted as being **wire wrap talents**. Wire wrap talents all give the character an additional way to use Spirit as they channel electricity through their wire wraps. These can only be used by a character with the **Wireclad** special ability possessed by Conduit characters.

ADVANCED ARCHETYPE: READER

The priests of the Conduits, Readers are so named because they alone can receive instructions and commands from the Generator — they “read” the signals received by their Diode Disc implants and are conveyed as pulses of current along their wire wraps. They keep the rites and rituals of life within each Node, and their word is considered to be the will of the Generator itself, which has caused some strife and even open conflict between Nodes when their Readers reach different conclusions.

Missions to the surface are always at the direction of a Reader, and always with careful consideration and planning. Younger, less experienced Readers — often apprenticed to a senior one — sometimes accompany these missions, to ensure that they are carried out as the Generator requires. In such cases, the safety of the Reader is considered as vital as the mission’s objectives.

This archetype may only be selected by Conduit characters.

- **Truth:** The character gains the *Truth Reader*.
- **Attributes:** Add +3 to one of Quickness, Insight, or Resolve, add +2 to one of the remaining two, and add +1 to the last of the three.
- **Skills:** Add +2 to one of Operate, Talk, or Study. Add +1 to each of the other two.
- **Tech Level:** The character’s Tech Level is increased by +3.
- **Spirit:** The character’s Spirit Pool remains unchanged.
- **Supply Points:** The character has +1 Point of Supply Points.
- **Talent:** Readers begin with one of the following talents: **The Generator’s Voice**, **Tech-Kin**, **Spark-Blessing**, **The Generator’s Wisdom**, or **Inductive Rebuke**.
- **Goals:** When you lead other Conduits to carry out some imperative given to you by the Generator, gain growth.
- **Equipment:** Reader’s Sceptre, one Hand-Made Weapon, Diode Disc implant, Scavenger’s Weave, 9 scards.

WHISPERS FROM BEYOND

As a Reader, a PC is implanted with a Diode Disc that receives signals from a being that Conduits call the Generator. These signals can be anything from clear commands to the distant buzz of static. Occasionally, these signals might offer something: information for a trade, for example. The Reader may be directed to leave certain supplies or a certain item somewhere, but in response might be directed to something else.

Just what these signals are and from where they originate is explored in the *The Will of the Generator* sidebar on page 6, and your GM should always consider just what the intelligence sending these signals would desire from a Reader PC. Are the signals coming from a creature benign or malevolent? Does it have the PCs’ best interests at its heart? Just what boons — or burdens — might it offer to players?





THE GENERATOR'S VOICE [TALENT]

You speak with the will of the Generator, and your words are its will.

You are considered to have a **supportive bond** with all Conduit characters in your group, and you reduce the difficulty of any Talk Skill Tests to persuade or command a Conduit by 1, to a minimum of 0. Non-Conduit characters are especially wary of you, and you may re-roll 1d20 on any Skill Test made to threaten or intimidate them, without spending Spirit.

TECH-KIN [TALENT]

You have learned deeper secrets to your implants, and you can share your thoughts with machines that are kin to the Generator.

When you attempt an **Operate** Skill Test to try to interact with a machine, and you spend one or more Spirit to purchase extra d20s, you can also re-roll 1d20 for each point of Spirit spent.

SPARK-BLESSING [TALENT]

You can summon the blessed current that the Generator sends through your wires, and convey it to others.

As an action, you can spend Spirit to generate an electrical charge at will, which courses through your wires. This can recharge a Powered item you are holding, costing 1 Spirit to recharge a Powered (Breather) item, 2 Spirit to recharge a Powered (Break) item, and 3 Spirit to recharge a Powered (Bed) item. You may instead charge the wire wraps of another Conduit, spurring them to glory: spend 1-3 Spirit to restore that same amount of Spirit to a Conduit ally you touch. This is a **wire wrap** talent.

THE GENERATOR'S WISDOM [TALENT]

You have learned to heed the minute fluctuations in the current that surges through your wires, for they are the guidance of the Generator made manifest.

You may use the effect from your Diode Disc implants up to three times per scene, rather than only once.

INDUCTIVE REBUKE [TALENT]

Your wires are woven in such a way that you can conjure a field of current at will, which you can use to repel your foes.

When you succeed at a melee attack — including an unarmed attack — you may spend 2 Spirit to add a *staggered* Truth to that enemy as well. If you're wielding a melee weapon which inflicts a *Shocked* Injury, then this also increases the damage rating of that Injury by +1. This is a **wire wrap** talent.



ADVANCED ARCHETYPE: SQUADRUNNER

An essential part of Conduit raiding parties, Squadrunners are skilled fighters and determined leaders. Blessed with additional implants and attachments to their wire wraps, they can often move faster, hit harder, and have better spatial awareness than ordinary warriors — for a time. The effort required to sustain this means they must strike quickly, and cannot easily endure long fights.

A successful Squadrunner is patient and wary, surveying their target from many angles before even considering taking up arms. They know that their advantages will not last long, so they plan to make the most of that brief, intense opportunity to achieve their goals, and they will not hesitate to withdraw if it looks like things won't go their way quickly enough. When leading a squad of other Conduits, they will often hang back from the fighting until the opportune moment, directing their comrades until the time comes for them to intervene.

This archetype may only be selected by Conduit characters.

- **Truth:** The character gains the Truth *Squadrunner*.
- **Attributes:** Add +3 to one of Might, Quickness, or Insight, add +2 to one of the remaining two, and add +1 to the last of the three.
- **Skills:** Add +2 to one of Move, Fight, or Study. Add +1 to the other two.
- **Tech Level:** The character's Tech Level is increased by +1.
- **Spirit:** The character's Spirit Pool is increased by +1.
- **Supply Points:** The character's Supply Points are unchanged.
- **Talent:** Squadrunners begin with one of the following talents: **Hurried Strike**, **Inductive Warding**, **Emergency Charge**, **Tactical Eye**, **Careful Onslaught**.
- **Goals:** When you defeat a notable enemy or take something from a defended location, after studying that enemy or location thoroughly, gain **growth**.
- **Equipment:** Two Conduit Weapons, one Hand-Made Weapon, Warrior's Harness, Burst Capacitor implant, 6 scards.

HURRIED STRIKE [TALENT]

You know when a calculated risk can lead to an opportunity to deal a devastating blow.

When you move and make a melee attack during your turn, you may add 2 Threat. If you do so, the attack inflicts one additional Injury. If you're wearing armor with the Charge quality (which would also grant an identical ability), you may not use both this talent and Charge at the same time: instead, the cost to use this talent is reduced to 1 Threat.

INDUCTIVE WARDING [TALENT]

You can direct a charge through your wire wrap that generates a field that repels incoming attacks.

At the start of your turn, you can spend 1 Spirit to activate your warding. Until the start of your next turn, you may add +2 to the Protection of any armor you're wearing. This is a **wire wrap** talent.

EMERGENCY CHARGE [TALENT]

You've learned to hold charge within your wires for later use.

Once per scene, after you discharge a Powered item, you may spend 1 Spirit to use it again as if it still had power. You may not discharge it again during that scene — you just have enough charge for one normal use of the item. This is a **wire wrap** talent.

TACTICAL EYE [TALENT]

You have a keen eye for the enemy's weaknesses and behaviors.

When an enemy takes an action while visible to you, you may add 1 Threat to ask a question about them, as if you had spent Momentum for Obtain Information. Once in that same scene, when you make an attack against an enemy you asked a question about, you may re-roll 1d20 without spending Spirit.

CAREFUL ONSLAUGHT [TALENT]

You hold your most effective attacks in reserve until the ideal moment.

Once per scene, when you make an attack, you increase the damage rating by X, where X is the number of actions you have taken during this scene that were *not* attacks.

CONDUIT TALENTS

The following talents are available only to Conduit characters.

NODE-SPEAKER [FIXER TALENT]

You know the ways of other Nodes, and tradition dictates that you be heard even by Nodes who oppose yours. You may only select this talent if you are a **Conduit** with the **Fixer** archetype.

When you are attacked by Thrall NPCs — other than those aligned with the Dark City — you may demand to be heard (speaking ritual words in Qualan). If you do so, Thrall NPCs must spend 1 Threat in order to attack you until after you have had the opportunity to speak for yourself. You may re-roll 1d20 on any Talk Skill Test you attempt to persuade those Thralls of something.

SCOUT'S INSIGHT [GATHERER TALENT]

You've become skilled at spotting the signs that indicate valuable resources that your Node can use — but you know that resources also invite competition. You may only select this talent if you are a **Conduit** with the **Gatherer** archetype.

Once per adventure, when you enter a new area, you may add 2 to Threat to declare that there is something valuable that can be found nearby. The GM will determine what the valuables are, based on the environment and circumstances (salvage, raw materials, supply points, food, clean water, or valuable information), but will also come up with some problems or obstacles that you must overcome to secure those resources. This could be rivals trying to gather those resources, wild animals, a dangerous environment, or similar.



MORE HASTE, LESS SPEED [GRABBER TALENT]

There's a difference between doing something quickly and rushing, and you've learned that lesson the hard way in numerous raids and scavenging runs. You may only select this talent if you are a **Conduit** with the **Grabber** archetype.

You reduce the Momentum costs to **Reduce Time** or **Follow-Up** to 1.

ENCIRCLE [GUARDIAN TALENT]

You know that there is strength in numbers, and you know how best to capitalize on that. You may only select this talent if you are a **Conduit** with the **Guardian** archetype.

When you move into or within the same zone as an enemy who is in melee combat with one of your allies, you may spend 1 Momentum to encircle them. When you make a melee attack against that encircled enemy, you add +1 to the damage rating of any Injury inflicted by your melee weapon.

READER'S ECHO [MEDIATOR TALENT]

You convey the Readers' lessons and guidance to your kin. You may only select this talent if you are a **Conduit** with the **Mediator** archetype.

Whenever you help a Conduit ally recover Spirit — whether during a rest, or by spending Momentum — they regain 1 additional Spirit. This stacks with the effects of a supportive bond.

BLADE-WRIGHT [TECH TALENT]

You craft the tools and weapons of the Conduits, and can aid your allies in making the most of them. You may only select this talent if you are a **Conduit** with the **Tech** archetype.

At the end of a rest, you may choose a number of Conduit weapons equal to your Operate Skill. These increase their damage rating by +1.

FEAR THE LIGHT [GENERAL TALENT]

You have learned well that you cannot trust the harsh daylight of the surface. You may only select this talent if you are a **Conduit**.

Whenever you attempt a Sneak Skill Test while underground, indoors, at night, or in shade or shadow, then you may re-roll one d20 without spending Spirit. Further, when you succeed at a Sneak Skill Test to hide or escape from an enemy, you may spend 1 Momentum to move 1 zone.

CIRCUIT CAPACITY [GENERAL TALENT]

Your wire wraps have been augmented with a handful of capacitors and batteries, allowing it to hold a charge. You may only select this talent if you are a **Conduit**.

You have a pool of 3 points of 'free' Spirit which may only be spent on options granted by **wire wrap** talents or equipment you possess. This 'free' Spirit is recovered normally as with any other Spirit spent.

THE GENERATOR'S PLAN [GENERAL TALENT]

You derive certainty from your place as one component of the Generator's grand design. You may only select this talent if you are a **Conduit**.

Whenever you suffer a Truth which represents you being threatened, intimidated, coerced, or frightened, you may spend 1 Spirit to immediately remove that Truth.

PATIENT HUNTER [GENERAL TALENT]

The Generator's promised future is upon a long and winding path. You do not rush to achieve goals that are long in the making. You may only select this talent if you are a **Conduit**.

Once per scene, when you are the last player character to act in a round, you regain 2 Spirit.



CHAPTER 3

THE BROKEN STEPPES

This place is rough...

Located to the far south of Nedresita, the region called the Broken Steppes is a harsh and unforgiving land. Encompassing thousands of kilometers of barren wasteland, sharp mountain ranges, windswept bluffs, and criss-crossed with a mesh of canyons and ravines, it is a forbidding and inhospitable place.

And yet, several groups of tough and hardy people have chosen to make the Broken Steppes their home. From enterprising Everans in Tawny Bluffs and Trench City, to Conduits who have found a way to live peacefully alongside some of the region's fiercest predators, the Broken Steppes hosts all manner of unique and exciting communities that have made the forbidding region their own.

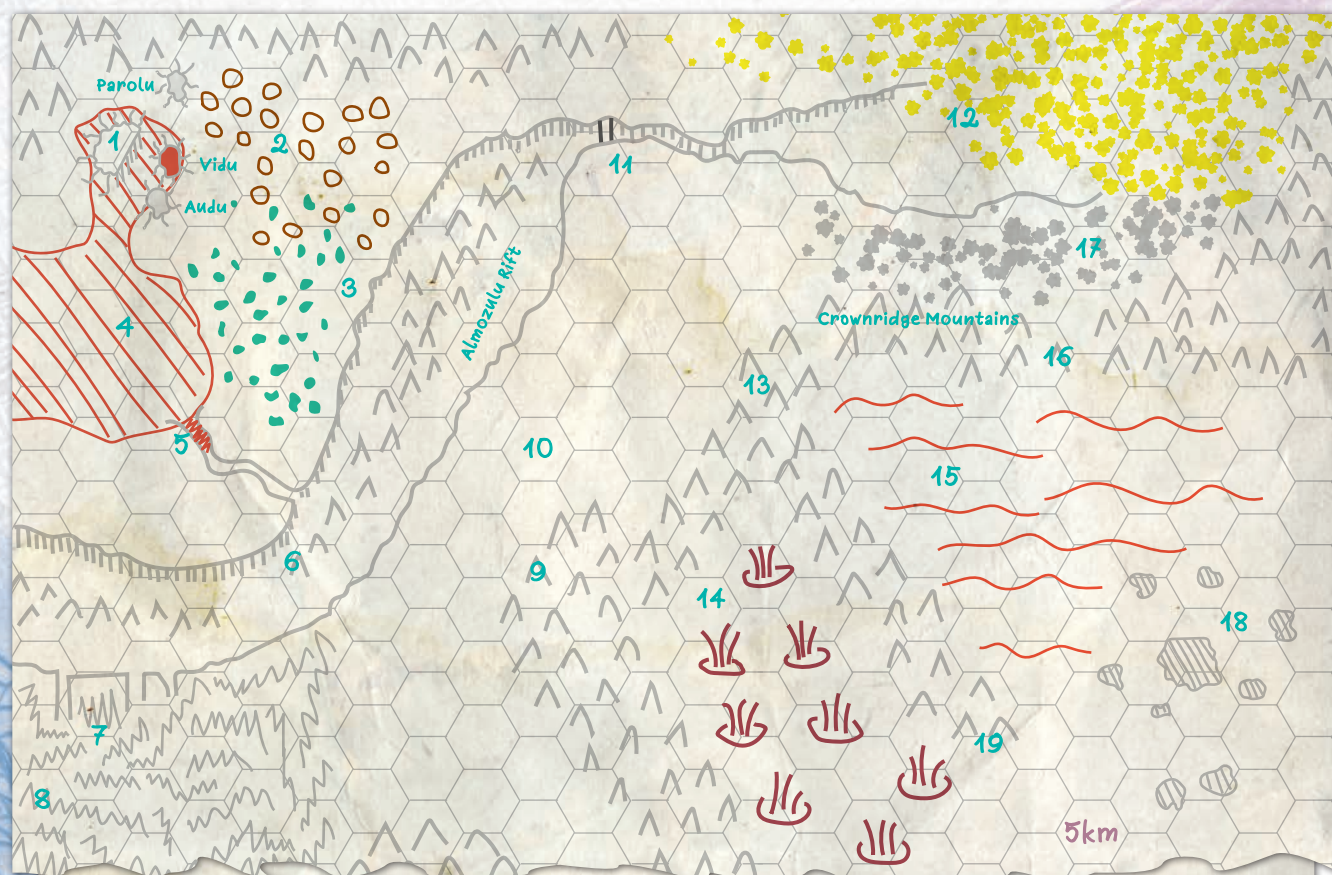


THE REGION OF SURIENTA SIMIO

Situated to the northwest of the Broken Steppes, the region of Surienta Simio is only a few hundred miles east of the great cliffs that divide this land from Bella Lagos. The region hosts what's left of the city of Trisagasimio, as well as three volcanoes, rugged mountain ranges and a giant canyon. It was formed long ago in the history of Evera Prime, at a time when the raging heat of the planet's core unleashed a seismic tsunami that lifted the land from its foundations, before dropping it back with a cataclysmic crash. The mountains that should have formed collapsed, the region's crust shattered like a delicate pane of glass, and the surface was remade in the forge of molten rock. Despite the eons that have passed,

to this day the Broken Steppes remains highly volcanic, molten warmth steaming against the ice-cold winds and drifts of frosted snow.

The land is desolate and treacherous, rocky and broken, the mountains short and squat — a dangerous challenge to traverse at the best of times. If that were not enough, the white-hot anger of the planet's core has not yet subsided, and without warning it will lash out: steaming geysers burst through sudden cracks in the ground; crevasses carve open to reveal lava-filled ravines and molten rivers below; landslides, rockfalls, and eruptions are all-too commonplace.



- 1: Trisagasimio
- 2: The Plain of Lava Domes
- 3: Maars Fields
- 4: The Lava Canyons
- 5: Lava Dike
- 6: Lotus Canyon and Mycellan

- 7: The Labyrinth
- 8: Dark City Outpost
- 9: Vacuum Tube
- 10: Trench City
- 11: Hanging Vacuum Tubes
- 12: Desolate Scrublands
- 13: The X.500 Node

- 14: Geyser's Vale
- 15: The Red Desert
- 16: Highguard
- 17: Forest of Stone
- 18: The Sinkhole Hills
- 19: The Procession Entryway

SURIENTA SIMIO

Even before the Builder War, Surienta Simio was a desolate wasteland devoid of Everan settlement — it was this remoteness that led Astraad Menin to choose it as the location for the La Scio Archive, concealed within its mountains. Off-grid and hidden from the Builder's prying senses, Menin saw this as the perfect place to build his bulwark against disaster.

Surienta Simio is dominated by three volcanoes — Parolu, Vidu, and Audu — all closely situated in the stretch of terrain called the Fairo Basin. It was to study these that a research base, nicknamed “the Wise Monkey House”, was established, only for it to grow into a city, albeit tiny by Everan standards. Trisagasimio — the “City of the Wise Monkeys” as it became known — was built on — and in — the mesa of a fourth, dead, volcano.

The raised land, ironically known as Fairo Basin, bordered to the south and east by the deep and wide Almozulu Rift, is a steaming mess, a deadly volcanic hellscape. The plains beneath the volcanoes are littered with lava domes — bubbles of almost molten rock that inflate under the pressure beneath, to either cool and solidify, or explode in a welter of lava and steam. Scattered around these domes are small pools of rancid water boiled by the temperatures below. Called “maars” by the Archivists, they pump acrid steam into the air, and occasionally explode in a shower of scalding water. The maze of canyons to the south of the city is a mass of lava, constantly fed by the volcanoes. The heat of this crimson reservoir is held in check by a mighty rock dyke, a natural formation that acts as a dam — should this ever fail the lava would pour into the canyon below, and threaten one of the few Everan settlements in this region.

Some people — hardy, tough, uncompromising people — make Surienta Simio their home. The folks of the Almozulu Rift survive by mining the riches thrust to the surface, most notably in and around Lotus Canyon. To the east, in the Crownridge Mountains, the Highguard Spear Cell, accustomed to the trials of life in the mountains, have learned to turn the dangers of the land into strengths. But they are not the only folks who have learned to live with this terrain — Conduits are found on the surface here. Long ago they were driven up from their subterranean caverns by the unpredictable volcanism, and forced to find new ways to live and remain hidden. Their ingenious

solution — to domesticate the deadly Kornowasps and use their giant hives as new Nodes for themselves — is as bold as it is effective. A scattering of other Everans also roam the landscape, hardy scavengers, scraping a living from the inhospitable landscape through their ingenuity, resilience, and teamwork.

The immense Almozulu Rift cleaves the region in two, from the cavernous Labyrinth to the wide open ground of the Desolate Scrublands, the Forest of Stone, and the Red Desert, which leads southeast to the treacherous ground of the Sinkhole Hills. To the west of the Sinkhole Hills, and south of the canyon, is the Geyser's Vale — a plain of hot springs, violent water spouts and a rare oasis of lush flora.

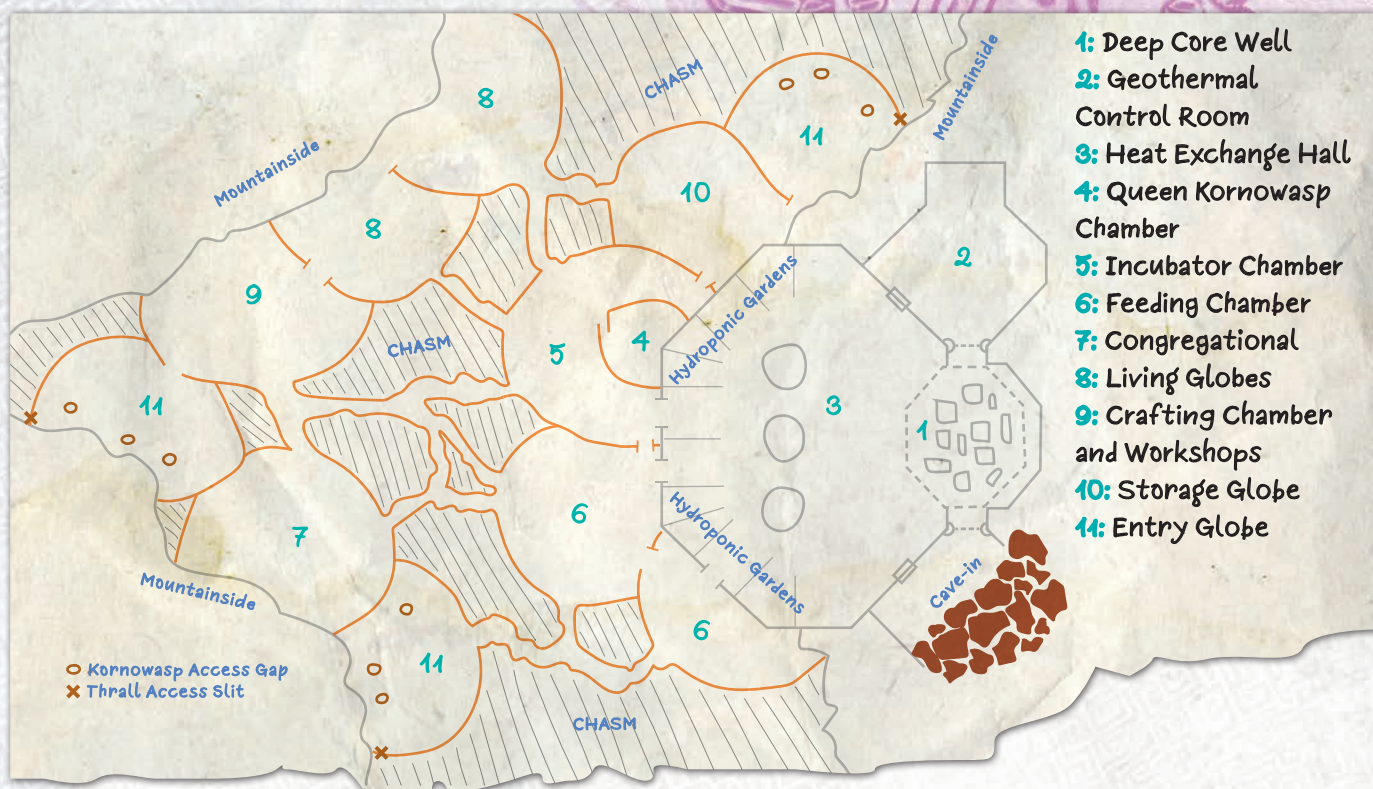
A notable feature of the landscape, and a throwback to the technological marvels of the Old World, is the exposed structures of the old transport vacuum tubes. Found in the Horseshoe Mountains, and suspended at a height of 100 meters, the collection of vacuum tubes pass from one side to the other. Cracked and decaying, where they go to or come from is anyone's guess, and no one who has ventured into them has ever returned to tell their tale.

THE SECRETS OF SURIENTA SIMIO

The presence of the La Scio Archive is not the only secret that the region of Surienta Simio harbors. For in the southwest, hidden within the mass of canyons known as the Labyrinth, hides an outpost of the Dark City, called Outpost 13.

The last secret that Surienta Simio holds is this: the seismic wrath of this region is not relenting, but building. No one knows for sure what the future holds, but the Spears and Conduits have noted the signs. A volcanic eruption is coming, one which will engulf the entire region in a cataclysm the likes of which have not been seen for millennia. This apocalypse may strike at any moment, or may take decades to arrive. But when it does, the Broken Steppes will be destroyed forever.

LOCATIONS



THE X.500 NODE

THE HISTORY

Many years ago, a struggling Conduit community took the unprecedented decision to act against the Generator's will and move above ground. They had no choice. The volcanic volatility of the Surienta Simio was a threat to their lives, and their attempts to escape through the underground tunnels were constantly thwarted by seismic disasters. With the lives of their entire community under threat, their leader, PAN7176, made the fateful decision to move his community to the surface — despite the opposition of the community's leading Reader, TRX9899.

Emerging in the Horseshoe Mountains through an ancient vent tower for an all-but-dormant geothermal spike, they realized they were not the first to get there. Attached to the outside was the giant globular hive of a swarm of Kornowasps.

As the community reeled in fear, PAN7176 kept his head and fed the wolf-sized insects from his supply of moss that

the Conduits grow and turn into their unique body ash. The hungry wasps devoured it, and resisted their instinct to attack the Conduits. Over time, and not without patience and some tragedy, they formed a symbiotic relationship — the Conduits feeding the wasps their moss, and the wasps allowing the Conduits to live alongside them in their hive. Eventually the wasps came to regard the Conduits as part of the hive, and now stand ready to protect them as they would their own.

KORNOWASPS AND THE CONDUITS

The Kornowasps recognise their Conduit hive-mates by their odor, specifically the fragrance of the unique strain of moss they grow and use for their body ash. The insects detect them by sniffing, and then tasting them with a lick from their proboscis. Only those with the smell of the X.500 Node moss are accepted. All others are attacked as intruders.

THE PLACE

The X.500 Node has been inhabited for nearly two decades. The hive is tucked away in the Horseshoe Mountains, suspended across a chasm between three peaks, one of which has the heating tower built into its rock. Dark orange globules, up to 30 meters in diameter, are grouped together, connected by stout but hollow beams that also act as access tunnels across the hive. Kornowasps can be seen buzzing back and forth, squeezing into the hive through narrow gaps in the structure. Too small for the Conduits, they have built their own access slits that allow them to descend the rock face to the ground. It's a steep climb, and dangerous, and is only made when absolutely necessary.

Living alongside the Kornowasps has been a huge boon for the Conduits. The hive is strong and resistant to the winds that whip through the mountaintops, and is always warm thanks to the body heat of those within. Not only do the wasps protect the hive and their queen with an unmatched zeal, they also create honeymilk, a honey-like jelly that is a delicacy — and a trade for the moss the wasps are fed by the Conduits. But even more than that, the wasps are curious and acquisitive, scavenging shiny things they find, often bringing useful bits of tech and scrap to the Conduits.

PAN7176 and his people have no need to ever leave the Node, safely concealed and protected within the Kornowasp hive while TRX9899 and the other Readers listen for the word of the Generator. It's not clear what the Generator is trying to tell its Conduits, but TRX9899 interprets the signals as warnings of trouble on the horizon, that they will need the help of strangers from far away, and they may need to abandon their mountain haven.

The core of the Node is the old geothermal tower, built into the mountain. The Deep Core Well (1) was once the heart of the installation, and is still warm from the heat rising from the geothermal spike far below. The station no longer functions, but there is enough residual power to keep a few basic systems operational. It is still possible to access the underground network of tunnels and caverns, but the Conduits have not done so for a long time — there is nothing down there but fire and death.

Alongside this is the Geothermal Control Room (2), a chamber occupied by TRX9899 and his retinue of lesser Readers. TRX9899 jury-rigged a receiver to the control console, and uses it to receive messages from the Generator. He sits in meditation with his acolytes, interpreting variations in the radio static as messages from the Generator. No other Conduit is allowed here without permission. PAN7176 lives in the adjoining Heat Exchange Hall (3), a large chamber that also serves as his court. The heat sinks and radiator vanes that adorn the west wall keep this room very warm, perfect for the hydroponic farms growing the Conduits' moss, fungi, and other food.

The rest of the Node is made of the Kornowasps' globular spheres. The queen Kornowasp, bloated and immobile, lives in a small and supremely humid chamber (4). She is tended by her drones, and the Conduit MER5450, who is charged with the queen's welfare. MER5450 is also secretly tending to three queen larvae, gently nurturing them for the day when they will be needed. The eggs laid by the queen are moved to the Incubation Chamber (5). Filled with tiny cubicles built into the walls, floor and ceiling, this chamber is always abuzz with wasps tending to the future of the hive. Alongside these rooms are the two Feeding Chambers (6), where the Conduits' special moss is laid out for the wasps to eat.

One expansive globe serves as the Congregational (7), the meeting room and chapel of the Node. Conduits gather here at the end of a long day, or to hear the pronouncements of the Readers. A portable campfire — a technological delight scavenged from the nearby city — forms the centerpiece of the room, and gives off a reassuring warmth without the need for fuel or smoke.

The Node's Conduit population of about 100 live side by side in two communal Living Globes (8), sleeping on bunks built into the walls by the wasps. These are next to the Crafting Chamber and Workshops (9), and one globule is put over to storage of all kinds, including all the shiny bits of tech the magpie-like Kornowasps collect (10).

Access to the hive is through one of the three Entry Globes (11), with small gaps for the wasps to squeeze through, and handmade slits for the Conduits to exit to the mountainside. These chambers are always defended by at least five Kornowasps.

THE PEOPLE

PAN7176 is showing his age, and his leadership is coming under question. Some are jockeying to succeed him. PAN's right hand woman and companion, KTK0355, is the obvious choice, but she is almost as old, and some desire a younger leader. ZXA8110 has the most support, but is a hot-headed youth. Finally there's the Reader, TRX9899, who still, after all these years, resents PAN7176's decision to move their community above ground. He too is of the older generation, and will need to move quickly if he wants to secure the leadership of the Node.

Many younger Conduits are increasingly unhappy at the claustrophobic conditions in which they live. As ordered by PAN7176 for the Node's safety and security, no one is allowed to venture out without his permission. But these Conduits want to eschew the security of their existence for more adventure, and the chance to advance their mission and retake the surface for all Conduits. Some youngsters, encouraged by ZXA8110, have been sneaking out to scout the local terrain. Some have not returned.

The Readers have read the portents of cataclysm in the Generator's messages, so they secretly encourage MER5450 to nurture new queen larvae in case they need to leave. This goes against the warnings of PAN7176, who fears the queen will sniff out any rival queen larvae and turn on them for their disloyalty. Who knows if this is true or not, but so far the queen seems calm.

THE STORIES

The X.500 Node has been a superb haven for the Conduits led by PAN7176, but things are starting to change. The player characters can come across the Conduits in a number of ways:

- PCs are attacked by a swarm of Kornowasps that carry off something of huge value. They track them back to their hive to retrieve their possessions, only to get a huge surprise.
- The PCs discover the body of a Conduit being dragged by three Kornowasps — unknown to them this is a young Conduit from the Node, and the wasps are trying to repatriate their hive-mate. The body is smeared in the Conduits' unique ash, and has a package of Kornowasp honeymilk, something the PCs might wish to acquire for themselves.
- The PCs find a dead Conduit, but this one has a Kornowasp queen larva wrapped in his bag. This is an opportunity to return it to a hive, learn from it, or keep it for themselves — but the Conduits want it back.
- ZXA8110 needs help finding his wayward Conduits, and can't use his own people. Perhaps the PCs could be convinced to help.
- If the PCs are willing to help with this, ZXA8110 seeks their help in taking out his rival, PAN7176, who he describes as dangerous and deranged, and a threat to peace between Conduits and surface-dwellers.



KORNOWASP

These enormous insects, a nightmare cross between a wasp and a hornet, are always found in packs of between three and ten. Intensely territorial and aggressive, they will attack to chase away interlopers, but will usually relent once the enemy flees. They feed on mosses, fungus, and lichen, as well as the fluid innards of the larvae of other insects. If their hive is threatened, Kornowasps will fight to the death.

While Kornowasps are deadly, they produce a honey-like jelly called honeymilk. Honeymilk is a delicacy, much sought after by all who roam the plains of Surienta Simio, and reason enough for some to risk raiding their globular hives.



KORNOWASP

VICIOUS DEFENDER

12

2

DEFAULT

6

1

WEAPONS

Venomous Sting (melee):
Poison 2

Barbed Stinger (melee):
Bleeding 2

ACTIONS

Swarm (group only):
Spend 2 Threat when three or more Kornowasps swarm the same target. Make a melee attack; the attack inflicts both a Venomous Sting and Barbed Stinger attack simultaneously.

SPECIAL ABILITIES:

Tough Carapace: Protection 1 (0 vs *Breaker* attacks)

Swarming: When making a melee attack as part of a group, the target enemy cannot defend themselves.

HIGHGUARD

THE HISTORY

A shining beacon once stood in the Crownridge Mountains. It was a place of refuge, where Everans could experience the finest luxuries in one of the most beautiful vistas on Evera Prime. The High Garden Retreat focused on connecting with nature, and it did not allow communication devices or most electronics within its walls. Its namesake was the great, domed garden at the top of the facility, where many of the retreat's activities were held. Equine and garden therapies, guided walks, and meditation were all held beneath the dome in its heyday.

Then, the world ended.

For weeks, no one even knew anything was wrong. It wasn't until supplies stopped that people began to worry. The refugees that came shortly after were almost turned away — fortunately, the workers saw reason, and let them in. This fateful decision narrowly saved High Garden. The refugees brought with them news, skills, determination, supplies — and a radio. When the Builder's machines

inevitably followed, they found their prey armed with well-laid traps, valuable information, and crudely-made Electrospears.

The battle that followed lives on in legends and the ruined husks of machines still dotting the path to Highguard's entrance.

The survivors then faced the grueling task of rebuilding and preparing for the next assault. Old divisions were cast off as they came together, focusing on survival and fashioning a home from the ruins. The High Garden Retreat seemed a complete misnomer now. The survivors had no further place to retreat if they'd wanted, and the High Garden's dome had shattered in the battle, so they gave it a more fitting name.

From the ruins of High Garden Retreat rose the Spear Cell of Highguard, a place they were determined would once more be a refuge from the harsh world, with the broken dome like a shining beacon across the Steppes to any who would behold it.



THE PLACE

The facility itself sits between two smaller mountains in the Crownridge range, nestled about halfway up the slopes and accessible only by one winding road that snakes upwards, a sheer drop to either side. Old machine carcasses lay across this road, forming the first line of defense. The husks have been arranged so those who wish to pass must carefully pick their way through the impromptu junkyard, leaving no clear path more than five feet wide at any point.

A single, gigantic shard of reinforced glass remains of the old dome, jutting defiantly above the peaks to either side of the mountains. It glitters in the sun, visible to travelers for miles around. Below that, the main building looms over the road, the drab brick of its construction practically blending into the red rock of the cliff face to either side. The narrow five-storey structure is in surprisingly good condition, with only three large breaks in the façade.

Visitors who make it through the maze of broken machines can see figures high above, watching their approach. These are the Highguard Outriders, Spears who have mastered riding Flat Tops (dubbed "Highguard Chargers") to traverse the mountainous countryside. To a Highguard Charger, mountains may as well be open fields, as they have little difficulty navigating even the steepest face with grace and speed.



HIGHGUARD CHARGER

The mounts ridden by the Spears of the Highguard Cell, Highguard Chargers are Flat Tops native to the Crownridge Mountains. They're tough, hardy, and extremely stubborn — but also extraordinarily loyal to a rider capable of treating them with respect and kindness.

HIGHGUARD CHARGER

LOYAL MOUNT

13

3

DEFAULT

9

2

WEAPONS

Dense Skull (melee):
Battered 3, Breaker

ACTIONS

Charge: When the NPC moves to an enemy and makes a melee attack, spend 1 Threat to Charge. If the attack is successful, the target gains a *Knocked Prone* Truth.

Rockbreaker: The NPC spends its action ramming and battering a solid object or obstacle in its zone. Spend 2 Threat: the object or obstacle is broken.

SPECIAL ABILITIES:

Armored: Protection 4 (reduced to 2 vs *Breaker* attacks)

Loyalty: If the NPC's rider is defeated, then the NPC will remain in the same zone as the rider and defend them. When making or defending against any melee attack within that zone, the NPC may re-roll 1d20.

Lower Floors

With the mountains behind, and the defenses in front, this part of the Cell is the most heavily defended, and it's where the youngest and eldest members of the community reside. The first floor is reserved exclusively for those too young to have gone through their Rite of Passage. The second floor houses the Armory, where the sick and the elderly are tended, and the Electrospears currently At Rest are maintained.

Middle Floors

Part of the western wall is missing here — it's long been braced, but never rebuilt. Instead, the kitchens have been erected here to make use of the added ventilation. There is always a chef on duty, but the title rotates between different Spears, (typically adolescents who have not undertaken their Rites of Passage), and the quality of cooking can change drastically.

The fourth floor was the most damaged during the Builder War. Most of the western wall is gone, with only the support beams still in place. A smaller gouge leaves part of the eastern wall exposed, as if great pincers pierced the building. This floor serves as the dining and receiving hall for the comparatively small Cell.

The Fifth Floor

Individual suites are often inhabited by members of the same family line, with several rooms set aside for ceremonial purposes. Most of the Cell's adults reside here, to be nearer the Flat Tops in the adjacent garden in the event of an attack.

A walkway leads from the fifth floor to what remains of the High Garden. Roughly a third of the huge structure still remains, suspended between the two peaks. This wide, crescent-shaped swath of earth hosts impressive vegetable gardens. Even in its diminished state, this area is huge, being about a hundred yards long and sixty across at its widest. A single, large shard of the original dome still stands toward the south, almost as tall as the garden is wide. This is the only place one can see over the mountains on the other side, and lookouts are posted here as Wakers have been known to scale the far side.

This is also where the Highguard Chargers are raised and trained. Every Spear is introduced to their Flat Top when it is a kid, and they grow together almost as siblings. The

Highguard Chargers are tough, hardy, and resourceful. When they're determined, nothing can turn them aside. They're also pack animals, instinctively refusing to abandon a member of their herd, including their bonded Spear.

They are the perfect mounts for a society that refuses to leave anyone behind.

THE PEOPLE

The Spears of Highguard dress very practically. Many of them wear hooded brown robes that have been cut off at the waist to shield them from the sun. They also decorate their bodies with washed-out reds and yellows, and they festoon themselves with light scrub plants to blend into the barren landscape. They intentionally coat their Electrospears in dust and dirt to keep them from reflecting in the sun.

If visitors act like good neighbors, two Outriders will escort them from the road to the complex proper. They'll casually chatter about undetonated explosives still hidden under the path, but this is mostly just to put some fear into their guests. Highguard Spears have a well-earned reputation for being more insular and less friendly than most Cells. They're also known to value their services more highly and expect outsiders to comport themselves courteously and formally in their dealings. When they ask for a price, they will take precisely one counteroffer before ending negotiations. Many suggest this wisdom is passed down from the entrepreneurs who once frequented the High Garden Retreat.

To the Spears of Highguard, traps are a way of life, so they do not see a point in engaging in contests of who can kill or trap Wakers creatively. However, they emphasize verbal duels and witticisms almost as highly as other Spears place physical contests and creative kills, and they prioritize mounted combat to all other forms.

High Rider Roti Zalonga is in charge of overseeing the security of Highguard, as well as the care of the Spears' Flat Tops. Roti is a very harsh-looking man, leaning heavily to one side on a prosthetic leg that's never quite fit him. However, he refuses to have it fixed, as he spends so much time in the saddle. He's much like the Chargers he cares for: territorial, stubborn enough to break rock, and potentially aggressive, but very tender with his "herd".

Acting Elder Smith Io Horstaff is young for an Elder Smith, barely into their mid-thirties. They are competent in their duties, but not confident in their skills. They speak with a stutter that has nothing to do with their physicality and everything to do with their discomfort in their new role.

High Guardian Mitri Boarspur has held the rank for nearly forty years. He's in his eighties but still stands tall and broad. His white beard nearly brushes the ground as he walks, and without his corrective goggles, his undersized eyes mean he is nearly completely blind. He speaks softly, but no Spear of Highguard will defy him. They remember how many Waker attacks his gift for strategy and forward-thinking have repelled. His temper is legendary but reserved almost exclusively for outsiders.

High Gardener Garda Illyndri is in her late twenties, and uncharacteristically serious, even for a Spear. It is her job to ensure the vegetables are taken care of, the supplies of the Spears never run empty, and to oversee any trade.

The High Guardian, High Rider, and High Gardener rule in council with each member's voice having roughly the same weight. However, in a disagreement, the High Guardian always has the final word, unless both the High Rider and High Gardener agree to overrule him.

THE STORIES

Highguard is one of few points of civilisation in the Broken Steppes — but that does not excuse it from having its own collection of issues.

- A recent excursion has left the former Elder Smith missing in action, and Io was the next in succession. However, they do not feel up to the task and desire someone to search for the Elder Smith's party.
- Highguard has become more and more insular from other Spear communities. In recent years, the population of Highguard has steadily declined, and now the first floor is at less than half capacity. The High Guardian worries that, unless something changes, the Cell could face severe population issues in the next few generations.
- Highguard has recently cut ties with a nearby settlement after ending negotiations, leaving them vulnerable to a Waker attack. Garda insists it's necessary to trade with them, but Mitri has grown tired of their insistence on haggling, and will not reopen negotiations for anything less than his last asking price
- A sickness has begun to spread among the Highguard Chargers, and Roti has exhausted his knowledge to no effect. The former Elder Smith might have had knowledge to help, but Io has no idea. Help must be sought from outside, but Mitri will still insist on the Spears' rules of negotiation.
- Roti believes that Mitri is getting too old to rule and wishes him to step down. However, he respects him too much to challenge him openly, and will cut down any who suggest harming the High Guardian.



TRENCH CITY

THE HISTORY

After the fall of Evera Prime, many were displaced from their homes. Driven from the cities with no destination in mind, they wandered. One group found a curious complex of trenches, nets, and blinds, with a single abandoned building set in the center. While most of them had no idea what this strange place was, a few of the individuals present recognized the abandoned shocktag complex when they saw it.

The game was a descendant of old sports like airsoft, laser tag, and paintball. Players wore specialized vests and shot at one another with buzzguns. When a player's vest registered a strike, it would give them an uncomfortable — but ultimately harmless — electric shock. While it was never the most popular game on Evera Prime, it had a dedicated following that enjoyed the risk involved.

Fortunately, this complex had already removed the drones, vests, and guns. The survivors hoped they might find food or other supplies inside the building. Instead, as they crept into the old offices, they found a few broken buzzguns, a handful of grease paint, camo fabric, goggles, and a surprising number of tarps. They also found a hole in the basement, where an underground stream had broken through long ago. It didn't seem like much at the time, but it would come to be their lifeblood.

Many were ready to move on at that point, but some had an idea. Where the others saw a waste of time, and a simple abandoned business, these individuals saw an opportunity — to make this place their new home. It would take work, dedication, and time, but these were all things the Everans had in ample supply.

The central building was comparatively comfortable, but it was also obvious. If Wakers came, it would be the first place they attacked. Instead, they turned their eyes

downwards. The complex had boasted over a mile of reinforced trenches and most of these were still intact. All they had to do was cover them, and unless one of the machines literally stumbled over them, they'd be comparatively safe.

Their first step was to deepen the trenches. Originally, the walls rose over six feet, but the new residents felt safer by digging down two or even three feet in several places. When that was finished, they began to push further out, extending the trenches in all directions. The hardest part of the process had been finding materials to reinforce the walls as they went: the first extensions were built using materials torn from the old business offices, but as the years have gone on, they've had to rove further and further from the settlement to find appropriate supplies.

The (re)designers of Trench City had carpenters, outdoorsmen, and former soldiers among them, but no city planners or engineers. The early trenches went in random directions, with dwellings haphazardly scattered along them. Only in the last few generations has the city developed in an orderly fashion.

The earliest homes were smaller, simple side trenches, as the early residents' experiments with roofs and tunnels ended in failure. They simply didn't have the resources to make the loose earth and dirt of the region into a sturdy roof, or the knowledge and tools necessary to dig better tunnels. Over time, the homes became larger, and now most are somewhere between ten and fifty feet square, constrained only by the materials they can gather and the size of their tarp.

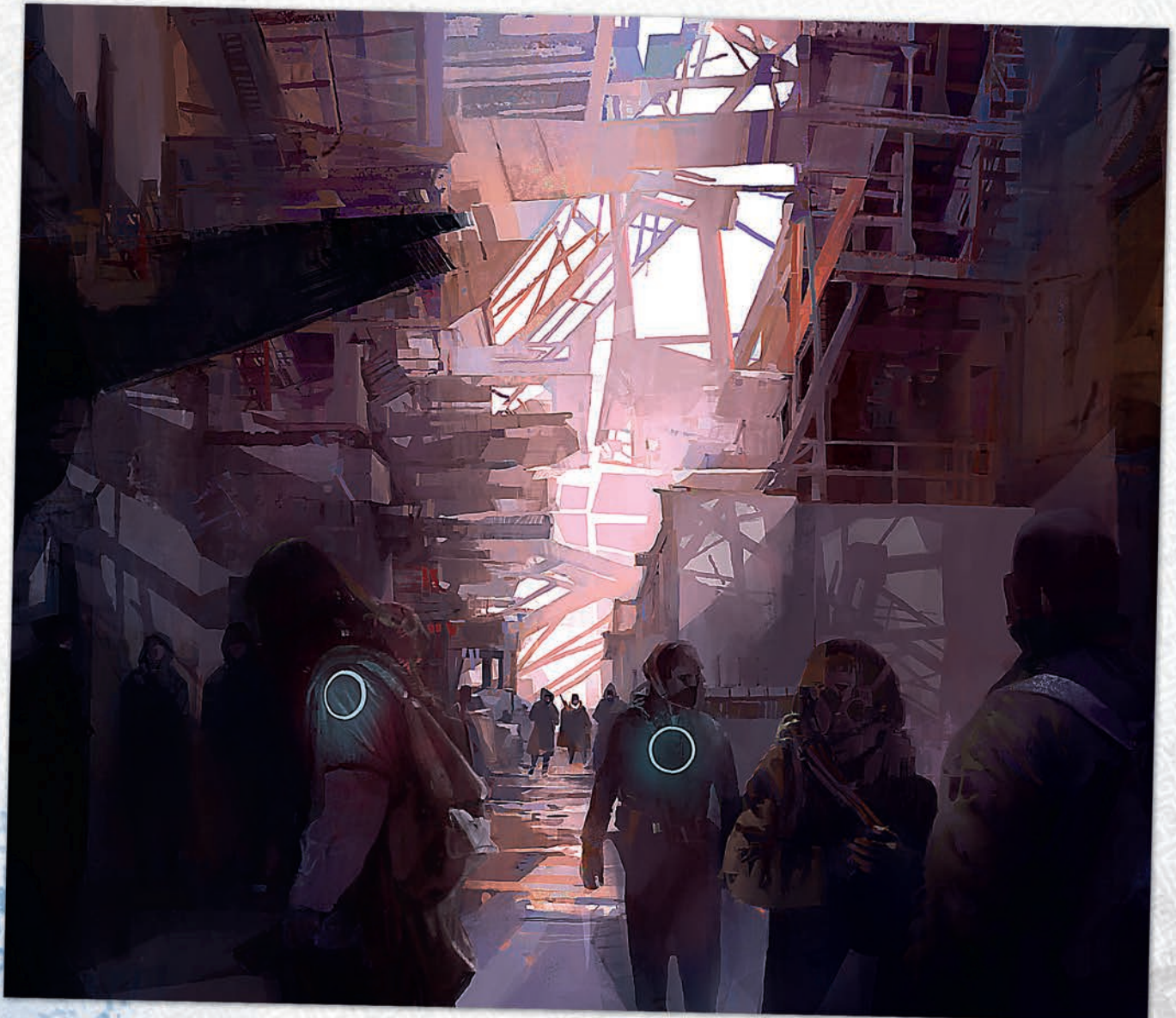
At first, covering the trenches with tarps was supposed to be temporary, until they could be replaced with something more permanent. As time passed, however, the lack of resources became more evident — the temporary solution gradually morphed into a tradition and a part of the settlement's culture.

THE PLACE

Traveling through the Broken Steppes can be a bleak experience. It's nothing but rock and arid scrubland for hundreds of miles. The average traveler is therefore very surprised when they find themselves confronted with miles of brown and red tarps, painted in bright purple anti-recognition GLIFs. Many at first think it's a mirage until they get closer and hear the unmistakable sound of footsteps, voices, and entire lives drifting up from below.

Trench City has stood since the fall of Evera Prime. It's a city that welcomes all manner of travelers, most of whom are happy for the little oasis the city provides in the waste. Its long, narrow streets host markets every other day of the week.

When a young family moves into their first home, the tradition is for them to paint the scrambling sigils on the tarp that will cover their trench-home together, as a sort of family crest. It then gets stretched across the top of their home with pride. If they move, the tarp gets taken down and brought along. The most traditional families only replace theirs if something happens to make the old one unusable, or if the family unit dissolves through death, divorce, or banishment. If someone commits a crime so heinous they would be put to death elsewhere, the Everan is instead given five minutes to remove their tarp and gather what belongings they can fit into it. This is then all they are allowed to take with them when they are banished from the community. Tarps that have become too broken to mend, or belonged to the recently deceased, are given to the Tarpmakers Society to be properly disposed of.



THE PEOPLE

Most people in Trench City never have to worry about fashion. The average citizen walks around dressed almost completely in patched camouflage, and most have a sturdy pair of goggles near to hand. Those early residents set a precedent when they started dressing in the left-behind camouflage outfits, and it survives to this day. They also took up and repaired the broken buzzguns they found, and even began crafting more as they could.

It's surprising to outsiders how everyone in Trench City looks like they're dressed and ready for war. Most of them walk around in patched fatigues and carry strange looking weapons, after all. However, scratch the surface and you'll find that most of them are just normal Everans, trying to get through life without (literally) getting stepped on. They serve their mandatory four weeks in the Trench City Guard every year, and then rotate out, most of them quietly dreading their next stint.

Gray Rostal, the settlement historian, loves to point out that you can date a section of the trenches by examining what the walls are made of. She is one of the oldest members of the community, having aged out of her former role as a trader.

"Alpha Dog" Coran Mealey is one of the few people to serve on the Trench City Guard year-round. She's tough as nails, not intimidated by anything, and far prefers life in her hunting blind watching for Wakers. She is responsible for training the Guard and she takes her work very seriously. She takes a special joy in performing surprise inspections on the active and inactive guards to make sure everyone's keeping themselves and their equipment in shape.

Chief Engineer Savi Penchak is pushing the city council to tear down and fill in some of the older sections to replace them with something more orderly. He's very good at his job, but not a very convincing speaker. Of late, he's also seemed pensive. When asked about it, he'll mumble about something weird in the latest batch of tunnels but refuse to discuss it further.

The Tarpmakers Society is a surprisingly — but understandably — powerful force in Trench City. They are made up almost exclusively of members of the Corpan family, currently under the iron-fisted rule of Irmag and Rayne. They have maintained a secret process to

create and source new tarps for the last four generations. Although it is allowable in the city to go and scavenge a tarp, it is a very dangerous prospect, and not everyone has the desire or ability to leave. Most individuals must rely on the not-so-tender mercies of the Corpans and the Tarpmakers for their needs. This monopoly lets them charge exorbitant prices as they have no real competitors in the city. Their son Ibso isn't as happy with the practice, but he's years from taking over. Meanwhile, there are rumors that Graccus Contar, the closest thing the city has to a city planner, is trying to establish a competing option, or just outright sabotage the Tarpmakers.

Trench City is ruled over by nine representatives from the original families that stumbled on the trenches so long ago. Currently, the Council is made up of Coran, Graccus, Rayne, Savi, Gray, and four others. Most meetings are loud, raucous affairs, ultimately decided by a vote. Irmag holds unofficial sway because of his family, but there is growing unrest in the Council, and he is secretly considering making his control more official — a move that would be very unpopular.

THE STORIES

Trench City exists at the end of the world for many — and as such, it attracts a certain cadre of people. Its dug-out streets are alive with rumor and speculation.

- Secretly, Graccus believes the community would be better served moving almost entirely underground. There's a whole network of tunnels that have been found recently, and he wants them mapped out as soon as possible.
- There are rumors of bizarre Spears that have been spotted darting about town after dark, especially in the newly-discovered tunnels, but there's been nothing to substantiate those rumors yet. The rest of the council wants Coran to assemble a strike force and ensure the tunnels are clean, however.
- Lately, multiple people have gone missing. It typically happens in the small hours of the night, and not long after, there is usually a report of the strange Spears somewhere.
- The traders have also pointed out, under heavy questioning, that someone else in the city has been offering to pay heavily for tarps.

TAWNY BLUFFS

THE HISTORY

Even in ancient times, the southern part of Nedresita was known for its rich mineral deposits. While most of the continent at the time was preserved for recreation, these deposits were mined to build and upkeep much of the technology used by the ancient people of Evera. Gargantuan mining mechs were installed within the richest cave systems to harvest every crumb of valuable material. These mechs housed many smaller mechs and tools for processing the materials before they were exported all over the world. When the Builder turned, the sheer number of mechs present made this region especially deadly, and there are no records of any human survivors from that time.

The first explorers to come upon the Broken Steppes and the Surienta Simio region in modern Everan times did so in search of the same thing as their ancient counterparts — ore, minerals, and parts to keep their burgeoning civilizations afloat. While they have been able to garner their desired resources, it has come at a great cost. Wakers still litter the landscape, hiding in abandoned mine shafts and sleeping in nearly every cavern. Not only that, but the cave systems are unstable from excessive mining. Even so, people, whether out of desperation, courage, or curiosity, still flock to the area in hopes of finding fortune.



THE PLACE

In the south of the Surienta Simio region of the Broken Steppes lies a mineral-rich, but dangerous place called Lotus Canyon. From above, the copper-brown, deep ridges of the canyon look like the flower it's named for, with fourteen gorges radiating like petals from the central valley. Creeks and streams from those petals empty into Sapphlin Lake at the center of Lotus Canyon, creating a rich, green, jewel of an oasis in this harsh landscape. The towering canyon walls provide shade and relief from the unrelenting heat of this area, making it more livable than most places in the Broken Steppes. The lush landscape is home to a variety of unique flora and fauna that make the place both beautiful and deadly.

Naturally, the town of Tawny Bluffs was built along the north shores of Sapphlin Lake. To preserve the fertile land for food production, much of the town proper is built into and around the cliffsides. Remnants of old structures provide the foundation for what has been built on top, and some settlers enjoy finding tidbits of information about those ancient miners who once lived there. Those who farm the land are stringent in preserving it, since losing this small oasis would cause famine for the entire region. There is also a strong Sentinel presence, as the area is rife with Wakers that lurk within the canyon walls.

Trader Lane

Miners are allowed to operate independently, and they gather to sell and trade their ore in Trader Lane. It is a raucous environment where prices fluctuate and competition is always stiff. Tawny Bluffs isn't known for a lot of trade outside of ore and minerals, but traveling traders who do come set up here as well. This is also where Grabbers who pick the mines trade with those in town and with travelers, selling parts for the various mechs in constant use.

Sapphlin Docks

Sapphlin Lake is the jewel of Tawny Bluffs. Both a recreational center and main water source, the docks are a lively place just a few miles through the farmlands. This is where Orbo's Pub lies, a favorite watering hole for those looking to escape the caves for a while.

The Farmlands

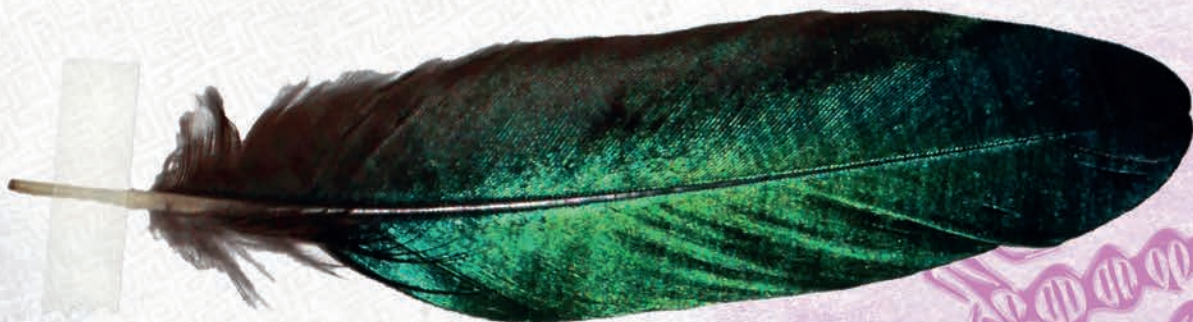
Most of the farmers in Tawny Bluffs live near ground level so they can travel to their land efficiently. The Farmer's Guild assigns crops for the year, and each field is protected from those who may want to steal more food than they've been rationed.

The Stacks

The majority of Tawny Bluff's residents are miners, and they live in tight quarters called the Stacks. This area is higher up on the cliffs, and the outer buildings connect directly to many caves within the canyon walls. While the residents are generally peaceful, they are plagued by Jadewings. The large, verdant scavengers roost amongst the stacks and are known for stealing precious foodstores, tearing apart homes, and even attacking kids.

JADEWING

Beautiful to observe from a distance, with a shimmering green plumage that seems almost iridescent in the sunlight, Jadewings are intensely territorial and frequently aggressive avians. Known for defending their nests with vicious fervor, they are also prone to thuggery, and will use their size, strength, and speed to snatch anything that looks even remotely edible — even if that something happens to be in someone's hand.



JADEWING			
AIRBORNE SCAVENGER		DEFAULT	
12	3	8	1
WEAPONS		ACTIONS	
Tearing Beak (melee): <i>Ripped 2</i> Flapping and Thrashing (melee): <i>Bludgeoned 1, Burst</i>		Bully: Spend 0-3 Threat when the Jadewing makes a Flapping and Thrashing attack; for each Threat spent, attack one additional enemy.	
SPECIAL ABILITIES:			
Flight: The NPC may ignore any difficult terrain on the ground, and can move through zones above the battlefield freely. Swift: When this NPC takes an action, it may spend 1 Threat to move one extra zone before or after its action.			



Miner's Hub

Within the canyon walls north of Tawny Bluffs lies an old mining facility they call the Miner's Hub. It is effectively the body of a gargantuan Waker that is outfitted with smaller mechs and other tools used for mining and processing ore. The Miner's Hub is also a permanent outpost for the local Sentinels, who do their best to put down Waker threats that arise in the mining tunnels.

Site 4

Three Archivists have set up in the caves at a laboratory known as Site 4. As far as anyone knows, this was once an ancient lab where they analyzed mineral properties and worked to refine the ores further. The Archivists now work to understand the old ways in order to improve current extraction.

THE PEOPLE

Tawny Bluffs is predominantly a mining and agricultural settlement. Those Everans who aren't farmers or miners will likely be Grabbers looking to search the cave systems for valuable items to sell either in town or abroad. Because of the danger, Grabbers tend to delve in parties and split profits from their dangerous exploits. In addition, amongst the people who have settled Tawny Bluffs are a few Archivists who study the vast amount of ancient technology in the area.

Neksa Ratovan

The current head of the Farmer's Guild, Neksa is a respected figure within the community. They are older, with short gray hair. They wear a wide-brimmed hat to protect from sun while they manage the farmlands, and their clothing is airy, light, and pocket-ridden to hold various tools. Their attitude is generally good-natured, but that can change if the farmlands are threatened. They will do anything to preserve the land, including seeking advice and aid from the Dreamer community living on the south side of Sapphlin Lake.

Simeran Forscythe

Simeran is the new, young leader of the local Sentinels. About four months ago, a Waker activated within the caves and Simeran's father, Cymius, was killed during the fight. Simeran now fights to keep the respect her father and their ancestors have maintained as the dynasty of Sentinel leaders in the area, but many of her now-subordinates blame her for her father's death and question

her capabilities. Simeran gives off a fierce, often bullish vibe on the outside, but behind closed doors mourns and blames herself for Cymius' death.

Orbo Redclaw

A large, gentle fellow, Orbo has run his pub — fittingly named Orbo's Pub — for the last 30 years. Losing an arm and leg in the mines (now replaced with Spear-crafted prosthetics), he took up the pub to keep himself busy. People said it wouldn't last, being so far from the town proper, but his excellent food and knack for singing brought the weary miners out from the caves. He and his husband, Jubilee, are credited for the flourishing of the docks, with restaurants, inns, and other entertainment growing around their "risky venture".

Archivist Calloran

Calloran is a shy person, but Tawny Bluffs knows him to be brilliant. He is highly respected for the help he's given to the town, since he is directly responsible for helping them increase production in the mines. He is a rare type of Archivist who is quite willing to share what he knows with all who ask — he believes deeply in the value of learning and that people are all capable of gaining knowledge.

The Pitch Divers

A group of five grabbers — called Kae, Sivo, Gorman, Tak, and Warren — are known to be the best in the area. They take the biggest risks, going into the dark depths of the cave systems, and have more extensive knowledge of what's down there than anyone still living. They guard this information closely, however, as it is the source of their livelihood. They are well-equipped with tech to help them survive, and other Grabber crews eye them with awe and envy.

THE STORIES

Tawny Bluffs is a high-competition, risky venture where many people are looking to hit riches and make a life for themselves. This goal is in direct conflict with preserving the canyon and keeping safe from Wakers, so conflict is inevitable though people try to resolve it safely and amicably if possible.

- With the recent, tragic Waker attack taking the leader of the Sentinels, a power vacuum has opened in the group. Can Simeran Forscythe fill her father's shoes?

Does she need some help securing her footing? Or is there someone else more befitting the role?

- Jadewings are terrorizing the stacks and threatening the foodstores of Tawny Bluffs, but there is disagreement over what to do about them. Should the residents learn to live and work with them? Exterminate them? Attempt to capture and relocate them?
- Tension grows between Tawny Bluffs and Mycellan, the Dreamer Community, as the miners encroach on the Dreamer's carpel mushroom grounds, destroying a rare and valuable resource. Can the two communities find common ground? Can they find ways to both get what they need without causing more Waker events?
- With an ever-increasing population, food production is a constant concern. Neksa Ratovan doesn't want people to know how dangerously low their food stores are, but with a less-than-stellar farm year thus far, rationing may be necessary for the first time in Tawny Bluffs. Can Neksa find a way to improve yields? Is there a resource they are missing? Could they negotiate help from the Dreamers who seem to have great knowledge about Lotus Canyon?
- Miners and grabbers alike are wary of diving into the caverns after the most recent attack. But trade must go on. Do they need bodyguards to feel safer? Can they find new places to mine and grab? Can the archivists help pull more from what they already have?

MYCELLAN

THE HISTORY

The original Dreamers who settled in Lotus Canyon didn't choose it as their first location. Knowing it was rife with Wakers, it isn't an obvious choice for those wanting to avoid Old World technology. But the surrounding areas of south Nedresita were too punishing for those who barely had a grasp on living without the comforts of the old ways, so they took the risk. They figured that, as long as they avoided using any technology, they would be safe in this secluded place.

They settled on the south side of Sapphlin Lake and soon found plenty of natural resources to sustain them. Knowing that these were scarce outside of Lotus Canyon, they grew fierce in their desire to preserve the environment

that gave them so much in return. These Dreamers worked tirelessly to make a community that has as little impact on the environment as possible, and they work to study and maintain its natural systems.

When more Everans eventually entered the canyon and settled at Tawny Bluffs, the Dreamers of Mycellan weren't necessarily welcoming, worrying that those using technology would activate Wakers. They were not wrong, but the tragedies tended to bring the Everans around on using less tech. A wary peace has existed since as both groups work to survive in and preserve Lotus Canyon.

THE PLACE

Mycellan is so blended with the nature surrounding it that one might walk by it and not realize it's a thriving community. The quick-growing wicker trees have been woven into living homes that provide shelter and camouflage, and the Dreamers here survive entirely off cultivating the forest's bounty for their benefit. Instead of cutting down trees to farm traditionally, they have planted favorable food items within the forest. They have befriended the Jadewings, partially domesticating them as they share habitat, and protect their nests from the predators that normally pilfer eggs. In turn, the plentiful eggs have become part of their diet.

The Dreamers explore the caves for the most prized item within — the carpel mushrooms. A bioluminescent fungus, the carpel mushroom resembles a glowing yellow center of a lotus and carries curious healing properties. Some Dreamers are determined to understand why it can cure a variety of sicknesses, but the mushrooms are difficult to find and even more challenging to preserve. Even decades after discovering it, they have yet to figure out how to cultivate it even within the caves where it is found.

The Common Ground

In a natural meadow, the Dreamers use this area to congregate for their festivals and ceremonies, as well as to cook communally. It is the most-trodden place within Mycellan, though they try to keep as much vegetation and wildlife intact as possible.

Panacea Lab

While the Dreamers are dedicated to avoiding Old World tech, the Panacea Lab is a curious hybrid. Housed in an Old World lab within the caves, they use the shelter but none of the machines within. Even still, some in the community will not enter the lab, and view doing so as "crossing the line." But the Panacea Lab is as far as they've been able to transport the carpel mushroom before its potency deteriorates, and thus the compromise has been made by some. Natural pieces have been brought to the lab, and they study the delicate mushrooms through testing methods that don't involve electricity or machines.

The Fishery

Along the shores of Sapphlin Lake, the Dreamers have cultivated pools where they tend to native fish. They catch some of the population and maintain the ideal conditions for egg laying. They eat some fish, and the others are let go to maintain the population overall. Some in the fishery are frustrated with Tawny Bluffs' tendency to over-fish.

The Storehouse

Underground, there are a series of areas that the Dreamers have dug out for both living and storage. It is here that they keep all their food stores and other items that are shared within the community. When there is an overstock, they take the extra to Tawny Bluffs to trade for things they don't make themselves.

Ardent's Clothier

The best-known craftsperson in Mycellan is Ardent Weaver, whose clothier uses the natural fibers from native flax in the canyon to make fine clothing that is light and comfortable in the heat of the Broken Steppes. Other Dreamer communities know of Ardent's skill, and some come from far away to learn from them. People from Tawny Bluffs frequently request clothing, but Ardent is careful not to over-make and harm the balance of plants naturally growing.

THE PEOPLE

The Dreamers of Mycellan are wary of outsiders, but once it's clear you'll respect their terms they are warm and giving. They are a small community of a few hundred people at any given time: some of them leave to study with other Dreamer communities, and some return to share their gained knowledge with their community of origin. Other Dreamers travel specifically to Mycellan to study under Ardent Weaver, and there is also a growing interest in the carpel mushroom as tales of its healing properties spread. There have even been pilgrims of late coming specifically to see if the carpel mushroom will aid their illness, knowing that it cannot yet be transported far.

The Mycellan Dreamers pride themselves on caring for Lotus Canyon and view themselves as the stewards of the area. While they try to avoid conflict, they aren't afraid to confront other groups who may be putting the canyon ecosystem at risk. They have found an alliance with the Farmer's Guild of Tawny Bluffs to be useful, as their goals for preservation align even if their practices don't. The Guild carries much sway in the town, and has been instrumental in getting some of the Dreamers' wishes respected by the Everan town.

Freyine Sora Mai Netter

The current chosen Steward of Mycellan, Freyine oversees the community with a gentle but confident hand. She is in her mid-thirties, her hair black with a few strands of gray, with a face stern enough to say she means business. She oversees much of the diplomatic talks within Mycellan and also with towns like Tawny Bluffs.

Ardent Lyas Weaver

The current master of fabric and clothing in Mycellan, Ardent's age and wisdom shows in the lines of their face. They oversee the full process of clothing production, from gathering the flax fibers, to weaving the cloth, to sewing the clothing. It is all done by hand, with tools considered primitive to Evera Prime — spinning wheels, looms, scissors, and needles. But Ardent is a strong believer in the oldest of ways, teaching their apprentices that this level of self-sufficiency ensures that one can always provide for oneself.

Offrina Mycie Cadin Goddard

Offrina heads the research on the carpel mushroom and makes her home in Panacea Lab. A controversial character in Mycellan, some praise her for the progress she's made in understanding the fungus, while others worry she's crossed technological lines that will put the community at risk. She is young but brilliant, maybe too brilliant, and is more curious about other peoples across Evera than most Dreamers.

THE STORIES

There is always a little tension in Mycellan. Some want the community to stay as natural as possible, while others would like more comforts and resources. Community councils are often heated events, but compromises are found and everyone works hard to honor what each person wants to bring to the community.

- The biggest controversy in Mycellan is the carpel mushroom. Some see it as a miracle plant that will save many who refuse more modern medicine. Others view it as too high a risk for the reward. What might the origins of this mushroom really be? Is there a way to cultivate and preserve it? Would Offrina welcome aid from knowledgeable outsiders?
- As Tawny Bluffs encroaches both within the caves and on the lake, the Dreamers grow frustrated with their seeming lack of care for the canyon. Is there a way to negotiate terms for both communities to be happy? What might Mycellan offer to entice the Everans to reduce mining or fishing?
- With news of yet another Waker attack — the deadliest yet — the Dreamers are more concerned than ever that they are susceptible to one even without technology use. What defenses might they seek to employ? Would they become more distrusting of outsiders? More adamant about encroaching miners? Or would they reach out instead? Would they seek aid in protecting themselves?

Mushrooms
are weird...



TRISAGASIMIO, THE CITY OF THE WISE MONKEYS

THE HISTORY

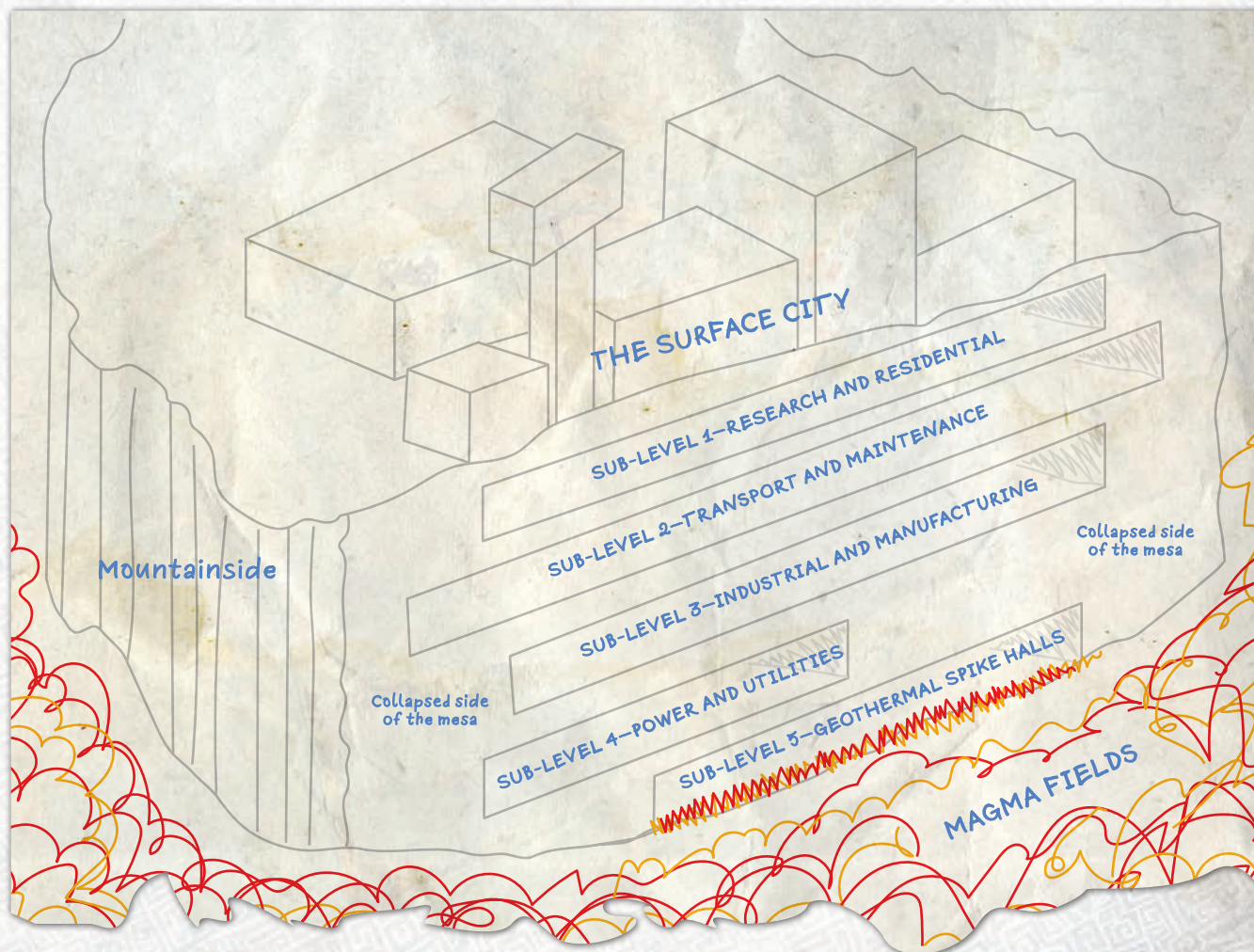
The city of Trisagasimio started life as a research campus, built upon the flat top of a 5 kilometer wide mesa to study the seismic activity of the three volcanoes of Fairo Basin: Parolu, Vidu, and Audu. Originally nicknamed “the Wise Monkey House”, the city itself was eventually called “Three Wise Monkeys” in honor of the triumvirate of scientists who became the city’s ruling council.

When the War began, the Builder’s assault on the region sparked the volcano Vidu to erupt on a hitherto unseen scale. To their horror, the “Wise Monkeys” of Trisagasimio, Professors Roj, Harsan, and Moon, knew there was nothing they could do to save the city. The mesa collapsed, half falling away in a landslide of gargantuan proportions, tearing out the heart of the city and leaving it exposed to Vidu’s noxious fumes. The poison gasses spared

no one, lava gushed around what was left, and flooded the lower levels of the city entirely.

Knowing they were doomed, the three professors fled to their research labs and uploaded themselves into three Loci Nanograms. This desperate attempt to preserve their knowledge and intellect for the people of the future was successful, before the wrath of Vidu claimed their lives.

For the next two hundred years the city stood, sweltering in the heat of the volcanoes and freezing in icy winds. No one came or went. Few creatures made the place home. But the city’s automatic systems struggled on, following their preset orders: to keep drilling ever deeper, installing geothermal spikes again and again, until the very crust started to crack. The Loci Nanograms of the professors had nothing but time to wander the empty halls of the city. Their mental states slowly deteriorated, until now they want nothing more than to be released from their endless torment via the total destruction of the city.



THE PLACE

There are three ways to gain access to the city:

- Access an old, abandoned, and forgotten vacuum tube terminal north of the city and walk along the now-defunct and pitch-dark tubes. This brings characters to Sub-Level 2, but brings hazards of lava, poison gas, and lurking Manylegs and Cryptids.
- Fly over the magma fields. Landing on the surface is easy, but landing in the shredded gaps of the other levels requires a Difficulty 4 **Quickness (Operate)** Test.
- Cross the magma fields, using a Difficulty 3 **Insight (Survive)** Test, to pick a path across the steaming plain, and access the city through Sub-Level 5.

The city has suffered much, and presents various hazards to any explorer.

Dangerous Structures: The entire city has been weakened by its turmoil, and at any time a floor may collapse or a building crumble.

Deadly Creatures: The surface is home to many Kornowasp nests (p. 33), wild Flat Top herds, and the Prowlcats who hunt them, while the darker, warmer, lower sub-levels harbor Manylegs, Cryptids, and other creatures no one has seen before (*Gamemaster's Guide*, pp. 132-144).

Wakers: There are Wakers from the days of the War to be found. There are few in the sub-levels of the city, but the surface city has more. Around the base of the mesa there are many. Most of these have been consumed by the magma over the years, while some are still functioning but trapped in the cooling lava. A few have avoided these fates, and stand ready and waiting.

Ongoing Eruptions: Showers of molten rock continue to rain down, foreshadowed by the distant boom of the volcano. Yellow plumes of gas billow into all parts of the city. To be caught in one of these without protective equipment is to endure an agonizing death.

Frozen Winds: The winds of the Broken Steppes scythe through the city, whipping debris into the air and

freezing everything they touch. Sometimes they swirl into monstrous icy twisters that sweep the sub-levels, throwing anything not bolted down into the magma fields below.

The Surface City

Heavily overgrown and badly pock-marked by the constant bombardment of molten rock, the surface city is a grim shadow of its former self — a tableau of the days after the eruption, with the calcified skeletons of tens of thousands of victims lying where they fell. Few buildings remain undamaged, including the 500 meters tall, mushroom-shaped Silverthorn Tower — from its observation deck the whole region can be viewed, and the city's history logs can be mined for Knowledge Fragments.

Other notable features of the surface city include the vast hydroponic pools. Once elegant greenhouses for cultivating food and creating a relaxing, garden-like environment, it now bursts with wild and exotic plants, and is guarded by mutated Akriti (*Gamemaster's Guide*, p. 132). Not far from that stands the giant nanogram chessboard the size of a football field, where the pieces play in perpetuity, fighting each other for real to win the game. Finally, there is the Conclave of the Professors, a stadium-sized lecture theater, where the wisdom of the professors plays over and over again.

Sub-Level 1: Research and Residential

The Loci Nanograms of Professors Roj, Harsan, and Moon are electronically tethered to the research center on this level. However, they have used their nanobots to each control a Medium Waker (*Gamemaster's Guide*, p. 162). They roam this level, but cannot leave it, effectively imprisoned here. They want to be released from their torment. To do this they want to destroy the city, and need to trick any unsuspecting explorers to do so by overloading the geothermal spike controls on Sub-Level 5.

Sub-Level 2: Transport and Maintenance

Vacuum tube terminals and vehicle bays are common on this level. None of the tubes work, and most vehicles are beyond repair. There is one flying vehicle here though: a four-seater Scout Skimmer (*Player's Guide*, p. 180), looking new and well maintained, but with no fuel — its owner and passengers are nowhere to be seen, although a trail in the dust implies they left to explore the city and never returned.

Sub-Level 3: Industrial and Manufacturing

Sub-Level 3 houses a malfunctioning robot factory, with several Industrial Atomas and Atoma Cubes, and many Knowledge Fragments, just waiting to be found. The factory can still be operated, but produces mechs with a flaw:



D20	FLAW
1-4	No functioning CPU. The mech can only be operated using remote control, which needs to be jury-rigged with an Insight (Operate) Test, Difficulty 2.
5-8	Overclocked CPU. The new mech latches on to the first person it sees and constantly tries to serve them. It repeatedly asks for tasks, instructions, clarifications, and feedback on how well it did its last task.
9-11	The mech suffers from only one leg, one track, or half the wheels it needs. It suffers the <i>Damaged</i> Condition (Gamemaster's Guide , p. 168).
12-14	The mech's manufacture is poor, with bad materials and shoddy craftship. It suffers the <i>Decrepit</i> Condition (Gamemaster's Guide , p. 168).
15-17	The mech's construction is a shambles, missing vital parts and parts installed in the wrong place. It suffers both the <i>Damaged</i> and <i>Decrepit</i> Conditions.
18-20	Faulty CPU. The mech hears the Builder's scream, and immediately becomes an active Waker, attacking any targets it sees.

Sub-Level 4: Power and Utilities

This sub-level is destroyed, a blast of magma and pyroclastic cloud incinerating everything they touched and bringing the walls and ceilings down. It is possible to travel past this level between Sub-Levels 3 and 5, but it's a challenging effort with a Difficulty 2 **Quickness** or **Might (Move)** Test. If the Test is failed, the character suffers the loss of 1 Spirit for the effort in crossing the level.

Sub-Level 5: Geothermal Spike Halls

This level is severely damaged — not only was half of it lost when the great landslide happened, but lava has ebbed and flowed across it ever since, filling tunnels, blocking gateways, and encroaching on open spaces. Sub-Level 5 is a giant industrial hellscape, dominated by the sheaths and pistons of the kilometers long geothermal spikes — those visiting here feel like ants against the sheer scale of the place.

The automated spikes, constantly digging deeper into the crust, are the catalyst of the constant volcanism. The controls can be used, with a successful Difficulty 3 **Insight (Operate)** Test to turn off the spikes and allow the volcanism to naturally subside, or they can be turned up to increase the impact and lead to more destructive eruptions — ones that will destroy Trisagasimio altogether.

THE TRUTH BEHIND THE CATAclysm

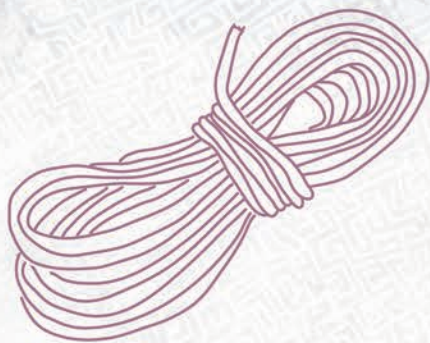
The impending super volcano that threatens Surienta Simio is being hastened by the activity of Trisagasimio's runaway geothermal spikes. With enough investigation and insight the player characters can detect this, and maybe do something to slow the inevitable destruction, or perhaps even prevent it entirely.

THE STORIES

Trisagasimio is a city full of danger and opportunity:

- Trisagasimio is rumored to be a cornucopia of revelation and discovery, even more so due to the hazards of exploring the city. An irresistible lure to any scavenger worth their salt.
- The Loci of Roj, Harsan, and Moon approach the PCs, telling their sad story and making friends, all with the aim of manipulating them to bring their torment to an end by leveling the city.
- The city's geothermal technology is waiting to be discovered by those brave enough to make the journey. How will the PCs discover the truth behind them, and what will they do once they learn that truth?
- Who arrived in the Scout Skimmer? Why? And where are they now?
- The Dark City is aware of Trisagasimio and wants its secrets for themselves. They do not welcome the arrival of other explorers.
- The Kornowasps of the X.500 Node keep bringing back shiny trinkets from the city, so much so that the Thrall ZXA8110 makes an unauthorized scavenger party to scout the place. What will they find, and what will ZXA's leader, PAN7176, do when he learns of his wayward Thrall's disobedience?





CHAPTER 4

SETTLEMENT BUILDING

Home is where the heart is!



During the course of their adventures, player characters will visit all kinds of weird and wonderful places. From Dreamer settlements in isolated and tranquil groves, to Spear outposts sequestered away at the peaks of barren and blustery mountains, Nedresita is full to the brim with all kinds of weird and wonderful people and communities upon which characters can leave their mark.



But players might decide that interacting with these communities isn't enough, and that what would truly make them feel at home in the *Dreams and Machines* universe is a place to call their own. In this chapter, we explore how this can become a reality, with rules that will allow players to build their own settlements.



SETTLEMENT BASICS

Before we dive into the details of how to build a settlement, there are a few basic concepts that anyone who wants to get stuck into these rules should be sure they understand. As such, this section describes the components that make up a player-run settlement in *Dreams and Machines*.

RESOURCE POINTS

Much like how the PCs have a number of Supply Points at their disposal to create small machines and tools, settlements have a pool of **Resource Points** (sometimes called **RP**) they can use to create **Structures** (p. 63). Resource Points represent what the settlement has salvaged and collected from the local area and has in its storerooms at any given time. This is a daily tally of the resources available to the settlement, and is tracked on the Settlement Sheet (p. 132).

Whereas items created with Supply Points only last until the end of a scene, due to a settlement's greater access to supplies, longer time scales, and its community's ability to plan, the things it makes with Resource Points are able to last almost indefinitely. While structures can still sustain damage, providing the settlement is able to repair them, they are able to withstand the tests of time.

GAINING RESOURCE POINTS

When players start their settlement (p. 57) they will not have any access to Resource Points. Initially, this means that PCs will have to undertake some of the hard work building structures within their own settlement. Once they have done this, have started attracting NPCs to their settlement (p. 70), and turned their settlement from an Outpost into a Village (p. 65), their settlement generates a baseline number of Resource Points, that can be increased by building certain buildings and selecting certain settlement archetypes (p. 94).

REGAINING RESOURCE POINTS

Unless the settlement is suffering from Truths that would prevent its residents from gathering resources, it regains all spent Resource Points at the end of each day, after those that are responsible for their collection finish the

day's work. A settlement can never have more available Resource Points than its maximum RP for any reason.

SPENDING RESOURCE POINTS

Most things that require the PCs to spend Resource Points are daily costs that represent continual drains of settlement resources. To track these spends, the players who run the settlement reduce the settlement's available RP by the amount indicated at the start of each day.

As most costs are constant, players should only have to update a settlement's available RP when a new cost is introduced, the settlement's maximum RP changes, or a cost is removed.

SETTLEMENT TRUTHS

Settlements have Truths that define their key elements and the area that they are in. These can be personal Truths that reflect the thoughts, feelings, and emotions of the residents, situational Truths describing events, or location Truths that describe the structures built within the settlement. For example, a settlement that has just been subject to a severe storm might have the personal Truths *anxious population*, the situational Truth *damage and debris*, and the location Truth *collapsed warehouse*, all of which reflect the aftermath of the storm.

SETTLEMENT TECH LEVEL

The Tech Level of a settlement reflects how capable its average residents are with technology, and what tools and equipment they are able to use, if gifted some by the PCs. It also defines what structures can be built and repaired within the settlement, as a settlement can only contain structures with a Tech Level equal to or lower than its Tech Level.

If a settlement's Tech Level should decrease, and certain existing buildings require a higher Tech Level than the settlement currently possesses to be repaired, then these buildings remain damaged until the previous Tech Level is restored.

SETTLEMENTS AS EQUIPMENT

While settlements are much larger than something like a hammer, fundamentally they are no different to any other tool. As the settlement's founders and current leaders, players will gain access to the settlement as an equipment Truth — even though it is one that is both immovable and capable of saying “no”. While the the benefits of using a settlement as a problem-solving tool are immense, doing so also comes with a number of disadvantages that are usually narratively driven. Overusing a particular resident's skills without compensating them, or regularly using settlement resources that could be better used to help residents, is likely to strain the relationship between the settlement's leaders and its people.

EQUIPPING YOUR RESIDENTS

Instead of just selling or throwing away any gear that they may no-longer want or have use for, players can choose to donate any bits of equipment that they come across to their settlement. Depending on the items that are delivered to a settlement, their quality, and their quantity, this will result in new Truths being added to a settlement.

In order for a settlement to make use of a piece of gear given to them, the settlement's Tech Level must match or exceed that of the item being given to the settlement (for example, a settlement with a Tech Level of 1 won't be able to make use of Tech Level 4 Grav Bike, EM Beamer, or a Bypass Kit).

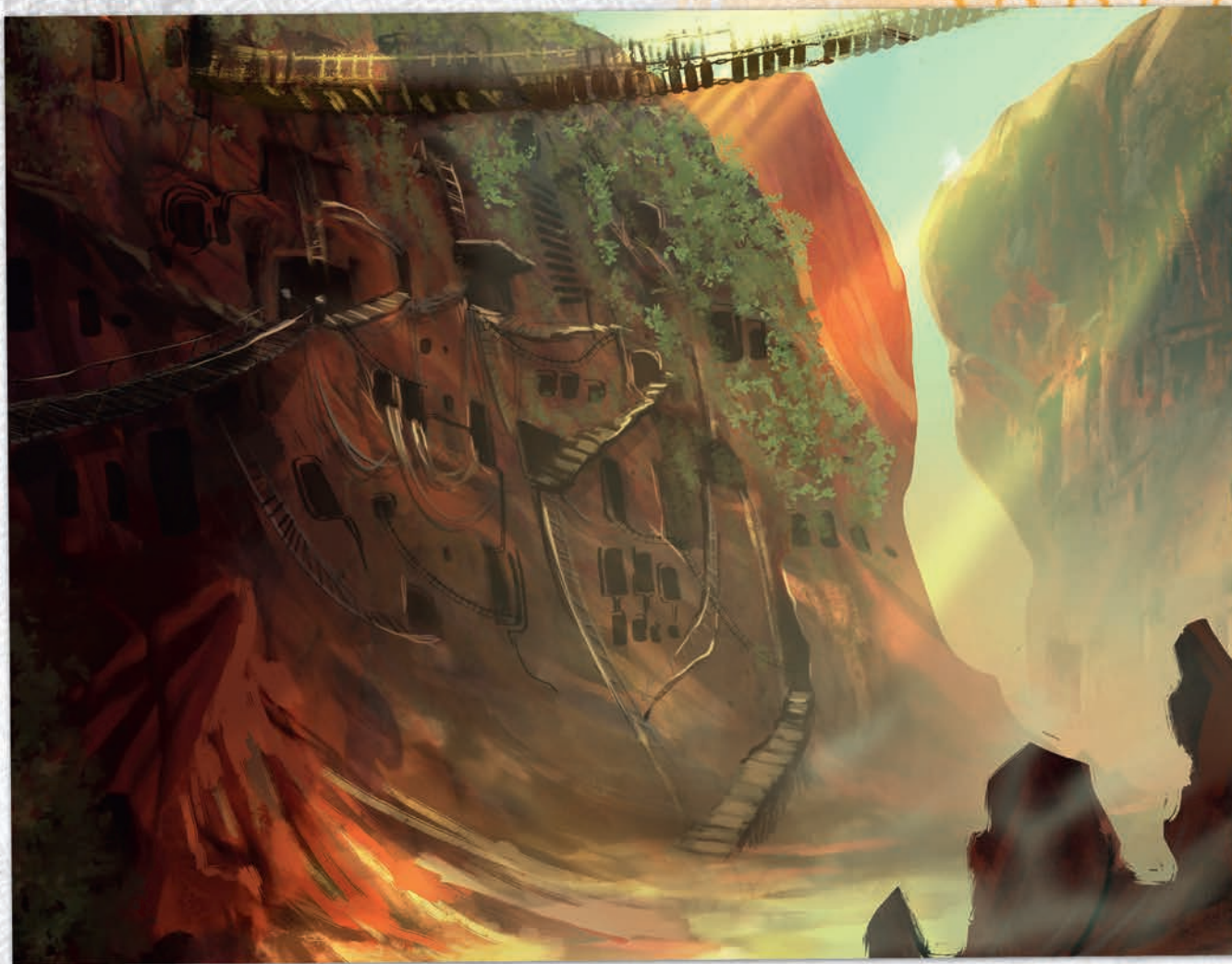
How the equipment is used is entirely up to the direction of the players and the discretion of the GM. Imagination and innovative use of items, as well as generous donations and thoughtful gifts to NPCs in a settlement, should be rewarded with interesting and beneficial Truths. For example, a surplus of weaponry may be given to the settlement's militia to gain the *well-armed militia* Truth, which might make resolving certain Major Events easier, or the settlement less susceptible to attack. Alternatively, healing items could be given to a medical center to gain the *well-stocked medical center* Truth, which could mean PCs' wounds heal faster when they rest at their settlement.

Any equipment given to a settlement or NPC in a settlement should, however, always be recorded as a Truth on the Settlement Sheet — no matter how big or small the donation.

HOW MANY ITEMS ARE NEEDED?

How many items a settlement needs to gain the appropriate Truth will depend on what the item is and how it is going to be used. A Surveillance Kit might make an excellent gift when given to an NPC monitoring another suspicious NPC as part of a Major Event. However, an NPC who works in the Hunting Lodge may need several kits in order to monitor several local animal paths at once.

This is particularly true when it comes to players donating weapons or armor to a town's military, as arming singular guards can only help so much. In all instances, the GM will need to decide just how many items of a type would need to be donated to a settlement in order for the gift to make a significant difference, and thus confer the appropriate Truths.



BUILDING STRUCTURES

In order to grow, a settlement will need to build structures that provide helpful Truths and much-needed services to the community. These structures come in all shapes and sizes, from simple benches to advanced electrified barriers. Initially, when it is an Outpost, the maximum number of structures a player-run settlement can support is **five**, but this can be increased throughout the game by upgrading the settlement from an Outpost to a Village (p. 65) and by gaining certain settlement archetype abilities (p. 94).

KEEPING TRACK OF STRUCTURES

When a structure begins to be built, it is noted down in an empty cell of the Settlements Structure Table, which can be found on the Settlement Sheet (p. 132). Each cell of the table contains space for the structure's name and the name of any NPCs that reside there. Additionally, each cell contains a number in the top left corner that is used for generating Settlement Events (p. 88).

Note that you do not need to fill every square on your Settlement Sheet with a structure — it's actually beneficial to leave some empty spaces (see *Recovering Community Spirit*, p. 55)!

COMMUNITY SPIRIT

While most Everans lack the potent mix of passion, drive, vitality, and luck that gives player characters their **Spirit**, the same cannot be said when people band together, united behind a common goal. There is no better example of this phenomenon than inside the walls of a player-run settlement, where the population stands united, under the watchful eye of Evera Prime's best and brightest.

Unlike a PCs' Spirit Pool, a settlement's **Community Spirit Pool** is only accessible to its residents during particularly pivotal moments of play, when the actions of residents will have a great impact on their fellow settlers or the future of the settlement itself.

A player-run settlement's Community Spirit Pool is determined by its size and the skills of those who lead it. The size of the pool is determined during its creation, but changes as the settlement grows and expands, decreasing in size as more people arrive at the settlement and the sense of a close-knit community wanes — unless players choose certain settlement archetypes to modify this.

Players may spend Community Spirit for NPCs in player-run settlement in the following ways:

- **Add a Die:** When an NPC that is part of the community attempts a Skill Test, the players may spend the settlement's Community Spirit to buy up to 3 additional d20s before they roll. Each d20 costs 1 Community Spirit.
- **Re-Roll a Die:** When an NPC that is part of the community attempts a Skill Test, but after they have rolled, the players may spend 1 Community Spirit to re-roll a single d20.
- **Avoid Damage:** When an NPC that is part of the settlement suffers an Injury or some other negative consequence, the players may spend the settlement's Community Spirit to have that NPC avoid that injury, with more serious injuries costing more Community Spirit to avoid. This follows the same rules for avoiding Injury as regular Spirit (*Player's Guide*, p. 87), with a *bludgeoned* 3 Injury costing 3 Community Spirit to avoid.

RECOVERING COMMUNITY SPIRIT

Settlements have a number of ways to recover lost Community Spirit. While some occur naturally, most revolve around the PCs spending time in the settlement, helping out residents, and acting as bastions of hope and positivity. Each way a settlement can recover spirit, along with how much spirit they regain, is listed below:

- **All Is Well (+2):** When a Settlement Event is rolled (p. 88), if there is no structure built on that cell of the Settlement Structure Table on the Settlement Sheet, then all is well, and the settlement regains 2 Community Spirit.
- **Resolving an Issue (+4):** Whenever players help resolve a Minor Event (p. 88) that creates a problem for the settlement, the settlement regains 4 Community Spirit.
- **Bolster the Community (+6):** At the start of a Settlement Sequence (p. 87), the PCs may choose to spend their time bolstering the community, by visiting their residents and spending time with community members. Doing so precludes them from taking part in the downtime segment of that Settlement Sequence unless the activities proposed are deemed narratively appropriate by the GM. At the end of the Settlement Sequence, the settlement regains 6 Spirit.
- **Celebrate (Full Recovery):** At the start of a Settlement Sequence, the PCs can choose to throw a party at the cost of 2 coin per structure built. What the celebration looks like, and what it includes are at the discretion of the players but could involve honoring members of the community or important events in the settlement's history. The celebrations last for the duration of the Settlement Sequence, during which time all structures in the settlement are considered Inoperable (p. 69) — with the exception of defenses and guard houses — as people take time off work to relax and enjoy the festivities. At the end of the Settlement Sequence, the settlement regains all lost Community Spirit and removes any negative Truths it acquired from running out of Community Spirit.

The gamemaster may adjust these values at their own discretion, depending on the Truths that are present in the settlement during the Settlement Sequence.

RUNNING OUT OF SPIRIT

When a settlement runs out of Community Spirit, the GM chooses one of the following Truths to be applied to the settlement:

- **Afraid:** The residents are frightened and will run instead of standing their ground. During conflict scenes, residents will use their turn to flee from the action, and will only act in self defense if forced to.
- **On Strike:** Until things improve, the residents refuse to work. Resource Points are not regained at the end of each day and some shops, at the GM's discretion, may close.
- **Demoralized:** With morale at an all time low, even the keenest of workers are unable to give it their all. When making Tests, NPCs will use their Default stats instead of their Truths, regardless of if they are relevant.
- **Rebellious:** Angry and unhappy, the residents of the settlement have begun to blame their leaders for their malcontent. Tests made to influence the actions of residents suffer an increased difficulty of +2.

The applied Truth lasts until it is resolved by the PCs (or other outside forces) and is not removed when the settlement regains its Community Spirit, unless otherwise specified.

COMMUNITY GOALS

Characters in *Dreams and Machines* are driven by goals, and communities are no different. As new leaders of a settlement, the PCs gain additional short-term and long-term goals that revolve around the community that they serve. These goals exist alongside their personal goals and are tracked separately on the Settlement Sheet.

- **The community's short-term goal** reflects problems that the community is currently facing and can usually be resolved over the course of a few sessions. Short-term goals include things like cleaning up the streets after a storm or helping restock a medical center's supplies.
- **The community's long-term goal** reflects the settlement's founding principles and ambitions. These goals tend to be aspirational rather than immediately and directly achievable. They impact how the residents may act towards others and gives them something to strive towards. Long-term goals include things like "make a safe space for the dispossessed to live" or "create a trade network that spans Nedresita."

Whenever a settlement archives a short-term goal, characters that helped it to do so gain 1 **growth**. New short-term goals are created when it is narratively appropriate for the settlement, so completing a short-term goal does not always mean a new one is generated.



STEP 1: STARTING YOUR SETTLEMENT

Building a settlement in the *Dreams and Machines* universe is intended to be a rewarding and fun experience that players can use to give their downtime between adventures more meaning, and help them leave a long-lasting and meaningful mark upon the world of Evera Prime.

CREATING AN OUTPOST

Gone are the days where cities would spring up overnight, their construction hastened by tireless mechanical hands, moving in unison under the watchful eyes of the Builder. Nowadays, settlements take time, slowly growing from simple camps to warm and homely towns such as New Mossgrove.

The settlements built by players will never reach the majestic heights of those found in the Old World, and will instead have far more humble beginnings as **Outposts**. A simple affair, an Outpost contains little more than a handful of basic dwellings (like huts or tents) and a place to store and cook food. While they are far from luxurious, they offer basic protection from the elements and the dangers posed by Everan wildlife.

Setting up an Outpost will require the PCs to head out into the world and do three things:

Find a suitable location (below);

Explore the location they choose (p. 60);

Finally, they can **set up camp** (p. 62).

Once they have done all three of these things, they have their first Outpost.

1. FIND A SUITABLE LOCATION

Most folk spend years searching for the perfect place to settle down, traveling miles from their homes to find rare resources and safe-havens fit for human life. Fortunately, the PCs are not like most people, so they can achieve these goals much faster. They can rely on their skill

and knowledge of the land to find suitable locations by undertaking **scouting** scenes.

Scouting scenes last one day, and consist of a few rolls and a narrative montage to describe what locations were found and what happened as the PCs traveled to find them. At the beginning of a scouting scene, the GM takes a few minutes to describe the local area to the players before asking them what their characters and any NPC allies (if they have any) want to be looking for over the course of the day. Note that not every player has to propose a feature they are looking for, but there needs to be enough information in order to help the GM determine the location.

Such things players may want to look for could include, but are not limited to:

- A natural source of clean drinking water.
- An element of the countryside that offers a defensive advantage, such as a hill or a cliff.
- A nearby woodland where they can harvest timber or hunt for food.

*At the beginning of the **scouting** scene, the GM asks each player what they will be looking for over the coming day, having already described the local area in the previous scene.*

After a short discussion, Caleb and two other players respond that they would like their characters to search for a location near to Tawny Bluffs, a nearby town in the Broken Steppes. They want something that is nicely shaded from the sun, would be reasonably easy to defend from any attackers, and has animals they can hunt for food nearby.

Another player, Emma, has a different idea and instead wishes to find an underground base of some description. She isn't picky and doesn't really mind what the location looks like, as long as it is underground.



Once each player has described what they want to look for — or, if they don't have an idea of their own, which of their allies they will be helping with their own searches — the GM will ask them to make an **Insight (Survive)** or **Insight (Study)** Skills Test with a Difficulty determined by how hard finding the proposed location would be.

- **On a failure**, PCs are unable to find a location that matches their description. The character must return empty handed, or compromise and return with news of a workable, if undesired, location.
- **On a success**, while it may not be exactly what they had envisioned, the character does manage to find a satisfactory location. Armed with the knowledge of how to find it again, they can return with the good news.

It remains up to the GM's discretion what players are able to find when they start searching for a location for a settlement. If players fail to find what they are looking for, you can decide whether or not to allow them to keep searching the area they are currently in, or encourage them to move on and look somewhere else.



SETTING SCOUTING DIFFICULTIES

Dreams and Machines is a narrative-driven TTRPG. This means that a lot of elements of the plot and story are left up to the discretion of the GM so that they are able to make a decision about what would make the best story given whatever circumstances the players might find themselves in. However, this doesn't necessarily help when setting a Difficulty for a Test to find a certain geographical feature in a landscape that could feasibly not present it. For example, you are unlikely to find a plentiful source of water in the Broken Steppes' Red Desert.

When considering what may or may not be found in a certain region, consider the geography carefully: areas like Regis-Kasteel are more likely to host liveable landscapes than, for example, the Novaharo Desert. If in doubt, have a look at pages 27-39 of the *Gamemaster's Guide*, for more information on the geography of Evera Prime. Use this information to help you set a suitable Difficulty for any Tests associated with scouting. Finding a source of timber somewhere like the High Plateau would be relatively straightforward, perhaps Difficulty 2, whereas finding resources in the Novaharo Desert would be significantly more difficult — perhaps even Difficulty 5.

After taking a moment to consider, the GM asks Caleb to make a Difficulty 3 **Insight (Survive)** Test, with one of the assisting players adding an assistance die. While on its own, each requested feature is easy to find, adding them all together makes things significantly more difficult.

The GM then asks Emma to make a similar Test, but at Difficulty 1, with a complication range of 3 as they will be needing to journey into caves. It's easy enough to find somewhere underground in the Broken Steppes — but it might not be safe.

Caleb rolls 2d20 and generates a 2 and a 15, scoring 2 successes. His allies also roll their dice, but do not manage to contribute any further successes. Just short of the successes needed, they return to camp dismayed that their desired location does not seem to exist. While they still like the idea of what they were looking for, they will need to change their specifications — or try somewhere else.

Emma spends 1 Spirit and rolls 3d20, rolling 1 success and a complication. She manages to find an underground location that would be suitable for settling, however gets stuck in the cave, its mouth having collapsed down on her character just before leaving. Fortunately, the other group hears this on their way back and are able to help her.

Once all PCs have returned, the scene should end with a short period of discussion, during which the players can decide what to do next — and decide if they wish to **Explore** any of the found locations.

Success at a Cost

If a player fails their Tests to find a suitable settlement location, you can offer them success at a cost. This allows them to discover their chosen location, but also means that it will have a greater number of Underlying Issues (see adjacent).

While creating Underlying Issues, if a player succeeded at a cost to discover the location, additional rolls on the Underlying Issues table cost 1 Threat per additional roll opposed to 2.

2. EXPLORE THE LOCATION

If the players decide to look into a found location further, they begin an **exploration** scene. During this scene, PCs will look over the area and determine if it has any **Underlying Issues** while getting a better understanding of the space and its surroundings. Exploitation scenes should be kept as short as possible, so the GM should encourage players to make decisions quickly — especially if they intend to look at multiple locations.

Underlying Issues

All locations have at least one Underlying Issue that the PCs will need to overcome in order to progress their settlement from an Outpost to a Village (p. 65). These Underlying Issues function similarly to Truths and can be used as such, and are unique to each location. Each Issue, however, falls into one of the several categories detailed below.

During the exploration scene, the GM rolls on the Underlying Issue Table up to five times, with each roll past the first costing them 2 Threat (unless the players succeeded at a cost when finding their location, see below). Each roll represents a location or situational Truth of the rolled type that will cause problems for anyone who wishes to settle in that area. These problems range in severity, but usually take no more than a few scenes — or the construction of a specific structure — to resolve.

Just what shape these Issues take is entirely subjective to where the players decide to build their settlement and, whilst suggestions as to what each could mean are made below, the final say on what each Underlying Issue is remains the purview of the GM.

D20	UNDERLYING ISSUE
1 – 4	Occupied
5 – 8	Dangerous
9 – 12	Messy
13 – 16	Harsh
17 – 20	Mysterious

- **Occupied:** Someone or something is already here. This occupier could be a friendly hermit, who will only leave if directed towards another livable space (or perhaps is offered permanent lodgings in the new settlement), or a hostile pack of Snarlbacks, who would love nothing more than to turn any visitors into dinner.
- **Dangerous:** There is something inherently dangerous about this location. Maybe the basin in which the campsite is located regularly floods, or is filled with poisonous and hard to identify plants. Maybe it is not the location itself that is dangerous, but instead the PCs, who pose a threat to the delicately balanced ecosystem present there.
- **Messy:** Settling here requires the PCs to tidy things up, be that loose logs and debris from a previously abandoned settlement, or complicated ownership deals as someone else lays claim to this bit of land.
- **Harsh:** From extreme weather to infertile ground, this location poses a serious survival risk to those who would wish to live there. Characters will need to find a way to ensure they are safe from these conditions before they can start growing their settlement.
- **Mysterious:** Something is not quite right about this location, and it's hard to put a finger on what. Maybe the birds sing late into the night, only to fall silent at dawn, or maybe it is something far more sinister, such as the ground shaking as if something is moving beneath the surface of the earth. Whatever it is, there is nowhere else on Evera Prime that is quite like this.

After a short period of discussion, the players choose to investigate Emma's location further, saying that they already are there as they had to save Emma's character anyway.

As they discuss, the GM rolls once on the Underlying Issues table, rolling a 3 for "Occupied". They take some time to consider what could be occupying the cave and how its presence could cause problems for the PCs. Eventually, they settle on an old and corrupted Nano-geist, who once ran underground tours of this cave system. The GM also then spends 2 Threat to add a second issue, this time choosing "Harsh" instead of rolling. They use this to add the Truth pervasive damp to the area, as the players are exploring a cave. They then prepare a few short scenes to establish the area and introduce the Nano-geist and the damp to the players.



3. SET UP CAMP

Now the PCs have familiarized themselves with the area, it's time for the big decision: do they try to settle in this place, or do they move on?

Settling Down

If the players chose to settle, it is time to congratulate them on their new home — ramshackle though it may currently be. The GM should hand the players a Settlement Sheet (p. 132) with any relevant Underlying Issues noted down under Truths.

They should then ask the players to name their new Outpost (or leave the name empty if they do not currently have one) and should then fill in the sheet with the following information:

- The settlement **Community Spirit Max**, **Tech Level**, and **Resource Points** should all be set to 1
- The **Resource Points Maximum** should be set to 5.
- The settlement's **short-term goal** should be set to "Overcome the Outpost's current Underlying Issues".

Finally, the GM informs the players that these values will increase later as they improve their settlement and work towards their short-term goal.

Moving On

If the players choose to move on, deeming none of the explored locations suitable, the GM should consider rewarding them with a small number of items or a Knowledge Fragment. This will help prevent players from feeling that they have wasted their time and will encourage them to continue looking for another suitable place to establish a settlement in the future.

After playing through the scenes prepared by the GM, the players decide that, despite the cave's flaws, it will make a reasonable hideout.

Caleb mentions that, while it was not his initial vision, the cave does fulfill a number of his requests, such as being close to Tawny Bluffs and being shaded from the sun. With a location decided, the GM hands the players their Settlement Sheet having already filled out the appropriate Truths. In addition to the location Truths, the GM also adds the Underlying Issue "Nano-geist tour guide", as while the PCs discovered and subsequently fought the Nano-geist in their exploration of the area, they were unable to actually defeat it.

An example Settlement Sheet for this Outpost can be found on p. 100, along with a version of the sheet as a Village on p. 101.



STEP 2: BUILDING YOUR FIRST STRUCTURES

Your settlement won't get very far without any buildings in it. Structures provide valuable resources and boons to a budding settlement, as well as places for any NPC followers or companions you may have to live.

In order to build a structure, you must have the requisite supplies, as determined by the structure's profile, and have found a suitable location to build it. All structures have a requisite **RP Cost Per Build Day**, a one-off **Coin Cost**, a **Tech Level**, and a **Build Time**. You will also need at least one NPC to run the building and provide any services that the structure offers.

PCS BUILDING STRUCTURES

When players first start building a settlement, they will have no Resource Points. However, should they elect to remain in their settlement and do the building themselves, they reduce the RP Cost Per Build Day of the structure to 0, and may use their own Tech Level in place of the settlement's Tech Level when determining what they are able to build. This means that PCs will be able to build their first few structures in their Outpost without having any RP — they will simply need to do all the hard work themselves. Note, however, that should anything happen

to that structure, if the settlement's Tech Level is not raised high enough, the PC who built the structure will need to be responsible for repairing it.

If they wish, at a later date when they have RP spare and NPCs living in their settlement, PCs can delegate building duties to others. Most of the time, construction in a settlement is handled by the settlement's residents and any specialized workers that are hired on. Despite this, some PCs may wish to take a much more personal approach by performing the construction themselves, choosing to stay at their settlement for the duration of a structure's build time and helping out wherever they can. If they do so, structures continue to cost no RP to build.



JOB DONE

Once you have built your first structure, add it to one of the twenty squares on the Structure Table on your Settlement Sheet. You can add it to any square you wish.

In order to reap the benefits of your new structure, you will have to assign an NPC to it in order to keep it running. This can be an NPC the players know from their adventures, or someone they recruit from another location (you can learn more about NPCs and settlements on page 70). If you do not have an NPC manning your structure, the structure sits empty and cannot provide any benefits until it is staffed.

Now you have a structure, your settlement becomes subject to the **Settlement Sequence** (p. 87), which determines how you interact with and run your settlement henceforward. Usually, a structure-building project is started during a downtime segment of the Settlement Sequence, as PCs will instruct NPCs to start work. When they are building a structure themselves, however, they can start building whenever they like as they are not relying on any NPCs to do the work for them.

Note that, whilst an Outpost, your settlement cannot have more than five structures built within it (see *Structures*, p. 67).

You can find a full list of the structures you can build in your settlement on pages 72-85.

GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES

If you wish to build your settlement next to a particularly notable geographic feature — such as a cliff, a river, or a network of caves — you may wish to add this feature to the Structures Table on your Settlement Sheet, and thus make it subject to Events.

The Events provided in *Major Events* (pp. 89-93) and *Structures List* (pp. 72-85) don't account for geographical features, so the GM will need to create suitable Major and Minor Events that could affect that feature (i.e. a cliff is affected by a rockfall). Note also that NPCs do not need to be assigned to geographical features, and geographical features do not yield any benefits, unless the GM feels there is a valid narrative reason for the contrary.

STEP 3: BECOMING A VILLAGE

The next step in a settlement's lifecycle is to grow from being an Outpost into a Village. In order to do this, the players must ensure that each of the following has been done:

- The PCs must successfully resolve the Underlying Issues they discovered when choosing their settlement location.
- They must recruit their first NPC to help them run their settlement (p. 70).
- They must have constructed their first structure.

Once all three of these have been completed, the Outpost is ready to become a Village.

VILLAGE BENEFITS

As a Village, the settlement gains a number of benefits, including a Community Spirit and Resource Point score determined by its size, and an increased structure limit of ten structures. The settlement's structure limit can be increased by a further five up to fifteen, if PCs select certain settlement archetypes (p. 94). The baseline values for Community Spirit and Resource Points generated by the settlement can also be increased by building certain structures.

STRUCTURES BUILT	BASLINE COMMUNITY SPIRIT	BASLINE RESOURCE POINTS
1-5	5	4
6-10	4	6
11 - 15	3	8
16-20	2	10



SETTING A LONG-TERM GOAL

When an Outpost becomes a Village, it is also time for its leadership to create a **long-term goal** for the community. This should be something big, like “become the societal center for all of the Broken Steppes” or “create a place where people of all origins can live in harmony”. While this may never come to pass during the campaign, it very well might in the wider story of the world and will allow players to leave a mark on the face of Evera Prime forever.

The point of setting a long-term goal is to promote good roleplay and character growth, and gives players a reason to keep engaging with the world of *Dreams and Machines*. It should not be something like “build fifteen buildings” or “gather a surplus of Resource Points”, as whilst this could prove to be tough to do, it won’t carry the same weight as reaching a narrative goal.

Dreams and Machines is about stories — and this is the perfect opportunity to let players leave a huge, ever-lasting impression on the world of Evera Prime.

TAKING OVER SETTLEMENTS

During the course of an adventure, players might come across a pre-existing settlement they decide they like the look of. Whether or not players are able to become leaders of a pre-existing settlement is entirely up to the GM, as the settlement may be important to the narrative, or its size may make it difficult to work within the boundaries of the rules presented here.

If, however, the GM does rule that players can join the leadership of a pre-existing settlement, the GM should decide how established the settlement is and what structures already exist there. The GM should prepare the appropriate Settlement Sheet, populating the Structures Table with any buildings that are appropriate (see *Structures List* on p. 72, and *Creating Your Own Structures* on p. 86).

BECOMING A TOWN

During play, if a settlement reaches its long-term goal, it transforms from being a Village into a **Town**, as it reaches an appropriate size and a level of prestige to necessitate it doing so. It has become a significant community center, and is well-known far beyond the borders of the region where it sits.

Having grown in scale and complexity, the settlement will no longer be able to manage itself without its leaders present. At this point, the PCs who run it must make the decision as to how they want the management of their settlement to continue. They can either:

- **Retire** (p. 98), installing themselves as permanent fixtures in the settlement and leading it locally. This option promotes retaining your settlement as a centre for meaningful roleplay and further narrative expansion, at the GM’s discretion.
- **Relinquish the leadership of the settlement to more appropriate individuals**, so that PCs may continue with their adventures. They will always be welcome back to their settlement, and each PC gains the *Truth local legend*, ensuring that local shops and businesses always offer their services at a discounted rate. This option allows players to reap the rewards of their settlement, and continue to enjoy their hard work but with less of the responsibilities.
- **Expansion**. Players relinquish control of their original settlement to new leaders, and go on to set up another. As a reward for successfully establishing one settlement, your next settlement starts as a Village, and you are able to build any three buildings of your choice for free. Note that PCs can establish no more than three settlements, and cannot be establishing more than one settlement at any one time. They do not, however, gain the *local legend* Truth with their first settlement.

Regardless of what they choose, the PCs will always be welcome at the settlement, though they may have diminished powers and responsibilities.

STRUCTURES

Structures come in all shapes and sizes, from forges to defences, and markets to docks. All provide helpful Truths and much-needed services to residents and PCs alike.

Structures in *Dreams and Machines* are described with the following traits:

- **Name:** This is the structure's name. This is considered a location Truth for the settlement that it has been constructed in, influencing what services and capabilities the settlement is able to possess.
- **Requirements:** What requirements a settlement must meet, if any, in order to build and maintain this structure. Requirements are either physical, like being constructed near a river, or NPC focused, where specialized knowledge is needed to keep the structure running.
- **Tech Level:** The Tech Level of the structure. This reflects how complicated the structure itself is to build, along with how technologically advanced any of its furnishings are. This is compared to the Tech Level of the settlement to determine if the community can build and maintain the structure. If the Tech Level of a building is higher than that of a settlement, it cannot be built. The structure's Tech Level also helps define

how long the structure will take to build and how many Resource Points are required to build it.

- **Scale:** The scale of the structure defines how large it is and is used to determine how long a structure takes to construct. Its scale also influences how many Resource Points are needed to both build and repair it.

These Traits are used to determine the following:

- **Build Time:** How long the structure will take to build, not including planning or other preparation. The build times found here are the base line, but can be adapted and modified to better fit the narrative. The *Structure Build Times Table* can be found on page 86.
- **RP Cost:** The number of Resource Points that are required to build the structure every day construction takes place. This number is equal to a structure's Tech Level multiplied by its scale, and is deducted from the total RP a settlement is able to produce each day (i.e. a structure costs 2 RP to build each day for the week it takes to be constructed).
- **Coin Cost:** The amount of coin required to hire specialist workers or buy the rare materials required to complete construction. This is a one-off cost, and the structure's cost is equal to three times its Tech Level.



STARTING CONSTRUCTION

During a downtime segment, players may request that an NPC or NPCs begin building a structure by paying its associated costs. After this, the NPC or NPCs will continue working on the project in the background until it is complete. While creating a structure is a time-consuming process, costing the PCs Resource Points and coin, it is often well worth it.

When players elect to start building a structure, remember:

- The **coin cost** is a one-off payment at the start of the project (i.e. players build an armorer, so pay 9 coin to begin building at the project).
- The **RP cost** is subtracted from the settlement's maximum RP for each day for the duration of the build time, and should be tracked on the Settlement Sheet (i.e. a settlement has a maximum RP of 10, and is currently building a farm, which has an RP cost of 4 — thus, for a week, the settlement's maximum RP is reduced to 6).

CONSTRUCTION SCENES

At the discretion of the GM, you can add in side quest scenes that take place during the construction of a building which allows PCs to get involved with what's going on in their settlement without having to just partake in the construction efforts.

These could be small jobs like finding a particular object or specialist tool that is needed as part of the construction process, or maybe finding an errant laborer — or even fighting a Waker they've uncovered beneath the foundations! These scenes don't necessarily have to contribute to the overall building of the structure (unless the GM decides otherwise), but should provide a way to add depth and excitement to the construction process, and make the settlement feel more alive.

RETROACTIVE CONTINUITY

There may be occasions when your players leave their settlement for an extended period of time — whether deliberately or otherwise — returning weeks later and realising that they didn't set any construction projects off in their absence.

In these instances, it is okay to say that building work took place in the group's absence. The NPCs that live in their settlement would likely not sit around and wait for them to get back before doing anything, so it is perfectly reasonable to say that they might have started working on a new structure in the PCs' absence, either on their own initiative, or on the instruction that players definitely gave before they left (but conveniently forgot about!).



INOPERABLE STRUCTURES

During the course of play, if a structure — or the NPCs who reside in it — take sufficient damage or are affected by certain Truths it may cause the structure to become **Inoperable**. While Inoperable, the structure does not provide any of its usual benefits to the settlement. This lasts until the Truths that are causing it to be Inoperable are removed or the damage done to it is repaired.

Repairing Damage

Repairing damage to a single structure takes one quarter of the time and Resource Points that it originally cost to build the structure, though this number may be modified by the GM depending on the extent of the damages.

If a large majority of the structures in a settlement are damaged, the GM may rule that they can be repaired *en masse*. During mass repairs, the PCs must stay at the settlement and take part in a number of scenes that relate to the repairing of the settlement. How many scenes are required and how long these repairs take is up to the GM, and during that time the settlement is unable to use Resource Points for anything other than repairing the damaged structures.

Destroyed and Derelict Structures

As a general rule, once a structure is built, it may not be torn down or destroyed for any reason. Players are building their settlements as supportive and safe spaces for their communities — it wouldn't be appropriate to force someone out of their livelihood, take away their home, and potentially leave them with nothing.

As such, there are no stats or mechanics that dictate whether or not a structure is completely destroyed during the course of a game. If, however, during your narrative, a structure suffers a significant amount of damage — for example, during an attack on your settlement, or a particularly dire Major Event — the GM may choose to have one or more structures completely destroyed. It is then up to the players what they choose to do: rebuild the structure as it was, or replace it with something else.

IMPROVING STRUCTURES

After a structure has been running for a while, the GM may consider offering an upgrade to the players in the form of an Event or as a request by the NPC who runs the structure. These improvements come in many forms, and while a number of them have been included with each structure, the GM is encouraged to create their own improvements and effects based on the examples provided. In order to gain an improvement, the PCs must undertake a job for the NPC who runs the structure or by spending RP to make renovations to the structure. There is no limit to the number of improvements that a structure can obtain, as long as the GM deems it reasonable that the NPC could attain them.

NPCs AND STRUCTURES

In order for a structure to become operational and provide any of its listed benefits, an NPC must be recruited to run it. This could either be an NPC that is known to the players, or an entirely new one of the GM's creation. How players recruit these NPCs to help them with their settlement — be they acquaintances from old adventures or people searching for a new start in a new location — is entirely up to the players and the GM, and should be determined by the decisions players have made during the course of their adventuring.

While many new NPCs may be more than willing to move to the player-run settlement, those that are more established in the world are unlikely to move in without some serious convincing. The Difficulties for Tests to convince someone to pack up their life and move to a brand-new settlement would be extremely high, as someone with an established livelihood is unlikely to uproot their whole life and move somewhere on a whim. However, if PCs spend enough time with an established NPC, help them with their business, and spend growth to gain an NPC bond with them, the Difficulty of any Tests to convince them to move to a player-run settlement will drop.

THE WIDER POPULATION AND BACKGROUND NPCs

Something you might notice as you read over these rules is that, beyond the mention of the need for an NPC to be assigned to and remain in each structure so that it can run, there is no mention of a wider population.

The NPCs that are brought in to run the structures will not be the only NPCs present in the player-run settlement. Each structure will also have a number of NPCs that, while pivotal to the running of the structure, are less likely to have a direct impact on the narrative. In addition to this, there are no options to build houses, and no statistics determining how many people are in your settlement. This is done deliberately.

These settlement building rules work off an **implied competent population**. There is no need for players and GMs to have to worry about managing potentially hundreds of different NPCs in a Village. Instead, these rules focus on the NPC specialists who keep your structures running and provide services. It is assumed that as your settlement grows in size and scope, and new people arrive to fill the various roles required in the structures you build, they bring with them their friends and families, who construct their own dwellings around

your settlement. Adding these background characters to the settlement will help the place feel significantly more vibrant and alive.

Some players and GMs, however, might find it useful to have some guidance information available on just how many extra people and buildings there are in their settlement, as it will help them describe the ever-growing community players are creating, and give them a sense of the scale of their civic achievements. As such, we recommend that for each structure that players build, between 3–6 new background NPCs arrive in your settlement and take responsibility for building between 2–4 houses to live in, at no cost or effort to the players, their characters, or the settlement itself.

Just what happens to these background NPCs, what their goals are, and whether they do anything other than act like “extras” in your adventures, is entirely up to the discretion of the GM. If you so wish, you can even add these structures to the Settlements Structure Table on the Settlement Sheet as a single Truth that represents all the homes in the settlement so they may be used with Minor Events — but this is entirely optional.

IMPROVING NPCs AND NPC BONDS

Players may wish to help their favorite NPCs improve themselves, supporting them as they work towards their dreams and overcome their flaws. While a sizable proportion of this will be narratively driven, at the end of the process the PCs may spend 2 growth to gain a bond (*Player's Guide*, p. 92) with that NPC.

The types of bonds players make with NPCs are quite different from those made between members of their party, but can be just as meaningful. Bonds with NPCs are not always symmetrical, like bonds with players are, but still have expectations of both sides. Encourage players to integrate the bond into their roleplay, exploring what holding that bond means to both themselves and the NPC with which they share it.

Role Model

You have gained the respect of this NPC, and have shared a number of lessons you have learned with them. Increase the NPC's Skills and Attributes by 1.

Close Ally

Once per adventure, the player may call upon this NPC to assist them in a scene, assuming that it is viable that the players can contact the NPC, and that NPC would be able to provide reasonable assistance (which might require them to travel).

Loyal

The bonds you share with this NPC are almost unbreakable. The Difficulty of Tests made to convince the NPC of a course of action that would be against the wishes of the bonded PC increases by 2 to a maximum of 5.

Trusted

No matter what comes to pass, you know that this NPC has your back. You regain 1 Spirit when you place trust in this NPC to protect you, whether directly or indirectly.

Favorite Customer

You have built a good rapport with the vendors in town and are always able to find the best deals. Once per visit to this settlement, you may reduce the cost of an item by 1 of its currency.

Confidant

You have gained the ear of this NPC, though they may not always agree with you they will always hear you out. The Difficulty of Tests to convince this NPC of a course of action is reduced by 1 to a minimum of 0.

STRUCTURES LIST

Below are a list of structures players can use to populate their settlements. When PCs decide to undertake a construction project, ensure that they pay the attached coin cost and mark down the RP Cost Per Build Day on their Settlement Sheet.



NAME	REQUIREMENTS	TECH LEVEL	SCALE	BUILD TIME	RP COST	COIN COST
Armorer	Skilled NPC	3	3	1 month	9	9
Defenses, Walls	–	1	5	1 month	5	3
Defenses, Barricades	–	1	2	4 days	2	3
Defenses, Watchtower	–	2	3	2 weeks	6	6
Farm	Arable land/farm animals	2	2	1 week	4	6
Garage	–	2	2	1 week	4	6
Guard Post	Willing residents	2	2	1 week	4	6
Hunting Lodge	Suitable hunting/foraging pastures	1	1	1 day	1	3
Kitchens	At least one farm or hunting lodge	2	4	1 month	8	6
Market	–	1	5	1 month	5	3
Medical Center	Skilled NPCs	4	4	2 months	16	12
Resource Depot	Previously untapped resource	2	3	2 weeks	6	6
River Docks	Near water	1	2	4 days	2	3
Waystop	–	2	4	1 month	8	6
Weaponsmith	Skilled NPC	3	3	1 month	9	9

ARMORER

REQUIREMENTS	TECH LEVEL	SCALE
Skilled NPC	3	3
BUILD TIME	RP COST	COIN COST
1 Month	9	9

Adding an armorer to the settlement allows its residents to buy armor of rarity 2 or lower, and also allows them to sell armor and get it repaired if the NPC who runs this structure is willing and able to do so.

1D20 MINOR EVENT: ARMORER

1-6

Nearby residents complain about the noise the armorer is making, and claim it is disrupting their sleep. Add the *restless residents* Truth to the settlement.

7-13

The armorer has run out of materials and has not been able to refresh their stock for a few weeks. Until this is resolved, the armorer cannot create new items.

14- 20

The armorer is holding a workshop, offering residents the opportunity to learn how to repair their own armor under their tutelage.



IMPROVEMENT

NAME	QUEST SEED	REWARD
Armor the Guard	The armorer wishes to help protect the settlement by providing armor for the local guards. To do this, they need massive quantities of supplies, something an old contact that lives a few settlements away could supply them with. Unfortunately, the two are no longer on speaking terms.	All guards gain Protection 1.
Specialized	The armorer wishes to develop their craft, but will need to train under a master armorer. They know of such a person, but traveling to see them is quite the ordeal and they doubt they would survive the trip alone.	The armorer can now sell rarity 3 and 4 armor that is made to order.

DEFENSES

Usually taking the form of walls or barricades, settlement defenses are an effective way to keep unwanted visitors out, and can take many forms. Presented below are a few examples, though if players think of another defense they would like to construct for their settlement, see *Creating Your Own Structures*, page 86, for guidance on doing this.

When one of these structures are built, discuss the look and function of them with the GM, and then add the appropriate Truths to the settlement.



Defenses keep us safe!

WALLS

REQUIREMENTS	TECH LEVEL	SCALE
-	1	5
BUILD TIME	RP COST	COIN COST
1 Month	5	3

BARRICADES

REQUIREMENTS	TECH LEVEL	SCALE
-	1	5
BUILD TIME	RP COST	COIN COST
4 Days	2	3

WATCHTOWER

REQUIREMENTS	TECH LEVEL	SCALE
-	2	3
BUILD TIME	RP COST	COIN COST
2 Weeks	6	6

D20 MINOR EVENT: DEFENSES

1-6

While wandering the town's perimeter, the PCs discover a breach in the defenses. Nobody can tell them where it came from, and further examination reveals that the destruction seems to be human in nature.

7-13

Those that are responsible for patrolling the defenses have been struggling recently with the weather or terrain, and are suffering from a number of small maladies and sicknesses as a result. The settlement's maximum Community Spirit is reduced by 2 until this can be resolved.

14- 20

Routine maintenance to the defenses has revealed a strange patch of metal, buried in the ground. Uncovering it reveals a time capsule from before the Builder War containing 2 Knowledge Fragments.

IMPROVEMENT

NAME	QUEST SEED	REWARD
Trapped Defenses	The NPC who runs this structure has heard that many Dreamer settlements implement traps as part of their defenses. Intrigued by this, they wonder if they'd be able to do something similar. They ask the PCs to travel to a Dreamer settlement, learn how this is done, and then share that information with them.	The settlement is now surrounded by Bombs (Tangle). Their position is only known to residents.

FARM

REQUIREMENTS	TECH LEVEL	SCALE
-	2	2
BUILD TIME	RP COST	COIN COST
1 Week	4	6

Farms come in various shapes and sizes and grow and maintain all kinds of produce from crops to livestock. Adding a farm to the settlement increases the settlement's daily RP by +1.



D20 MINOR EVENT:

1-6	Someone has vandalized part of the farm, and has caused damage to either crops or has allowed livestock to escape. Someone needs to repair the damage and try to salvage the situation.
7-13	A huge swath of crops are lost to blight. The settlement gains the Truth <i>rationing</i> as people tighten their belts, and this structure generates no additional daily RP until the situation is rectified.
14- 20	The farmer reports a bumper harvest. Stores are bursting with supplies — but what should happen to the excess?

IMPROVEMENT

NAME	QUEST SEED	REWARD
Fertile Fields	The farmer has heard that a particular experimental fertilizer was in development in a long-abandoned Old World research facility. They would like someone to retrieve it for them.	The RP bonus generated by this building is increased to +2.



GARAGE

REQUIREMENTS	TECH LEVEL	SCALE
-	2	2
BUILD TIME	RP COST	COIN COST
1 Week	4	6

VROOM
VROOM!



Adding a garage to the settlement allows for the safe storage of vehicles that are not being used.

D20 MINOR EVENT:

1-6

Someone complains that the garage is obstructing their view of the sunrise — they used to get to see it every day, but now this “eyesore” is blocking it. This has seemed to disturb them greatly, and if nothing is done they threaten to leave.

7-13

A flier is affixed to the front of the garage: it advertises a race going on nearby. Residents comment that they saw a young man with fiery red hair put up the notice before riding off on their trailbike.

14- 20

Residents have been hearing strange noises coming from the garage at night. Though they do not know it, a refugee from a nearby settlement has managed to break into the garage and is using it as a temporary shelter.

IMPROVEMENT

NAME	QUEST SEED	REWARD
Mechanics	With a little bit more work, this place could be transformed from a simple garage to a fully-fledged mechanic. It would only need someone with the right knowledge and a few resources to make the changes.	Repair vehicles and create vehicles of Rarity 3 or less
Ongoing Project	The mechanic hastens the group into the shop, saying they have a secret to tell them. After a moment's pause they pull a dusty canvas off the top of a run-down Rarity 4 vehicle. They tell the players that if they can help restore the vehicle, they are welcome to have it.	A vehicle of Rarity 4

GUARD POST

REQUIREMENTS	TECH LEVEL	SCALE
Willing residents	2	2
BUILD TIME	RP COST	COIN COST
1 Week	4	6

Adding a guard post to the settlement enables community members to be trained as guards. The settlement gains access to four guards who use the Everan Militia statblock (*Gamemaster's Guide*, p. 149).

D20 MINOR EVENT: GUARD POST

1-6 The village militia want to start undertaking regular patrols of the settlement, but not everyone is happy with this idea. Some claim that the enhanced presence of the militia is off-putting to residents, while the militia claim it's for everyone's safety.

7-13 A young girl wants to join the guard to protect her home and is adamant about joining; she is currently reluctant to listen to anyone who would tell her no.

14- 20 While the PCs were away, one of the militia members completed a task of great bravery, risking their life to save someone in need. The NPC who leads this structure wishes for the settlement's leaders to give them an award. The settlement gains 2 Community Spirit

IMPROVEMENT

NAME	QUEST SEED	REWARD
Lieutenant	A particularly eager member of the settlement's militia approaches the players, hoping to formally become their student. They wish to travel with the party to learn more about fighting before returning home safe with that knowledge.	The NPC now has a +2 increase to their main Attribute.



HUNTING LODGE

REQUIREMENTS	TECH LEVEL	SCALE
–	1	1
BUILD TIME	RP COST	COIN COST
1 Day	1	3

A rudimentary structure, a hunting lodge is little more than a shelter for anyone out foraging for food. It contains very basic beds and some simple cooking apparatus.

Building a hunting lodge reduces the Difficulty of all Tests required to track any creatures moving near the settlement by 1 to a minimum of 0. In addition to this, when this structure is rolled on for a Minor Event, the PCs may each add 2 days worth of rations to their inventories.



D20 MINOR EVENT: HUNTING LODGE

1-6

Someone reports that there have been sightings of a pack of wild animals close to the settlement. They might pose a threat to the population if not dealt with.

7-13

The settlement's foodstores are running a little low. It might be worth seeing if you can find something to replenish them with.

14- 20

A local individual claims to have found the wreckage of an old Waker nearby — but Wakers do have a habit of reactivating at inopportune moments. You might want to check it out and make sure it's safe.

IMPROVEMENT

NAME	QUEST SEED	REWARD
A Dangerous Hunt	Rumor is spreading that a dangerous creature has been spotted near the settlement, and it's posing a threat to the local ecosystem. Whether this thing is man, beast, or Waker it is unclear — what is certain, however, is that it should be removed.	The hunting lodge now increases the maximum RP of the settlement by +1.



KITCHENS

REQUIREMENTS	TECH LEVEL	SCALE
–	2	2
BUILD TIME	RP COST	COIN COST
1 Month	8	6

Kitchens provide food for the settlement, and can create a range of local recipes and more widely known dishes. What a kitchen produces will rely on what ingredients it has to work with and where they are taken from. In player-run settlements, kitchens often work closely with local farmers, hunters, or trappers, sharing a space where residents can buy both cooked food and cooking supplies. Adding a kitchen to a settlement allows for residents to buy food and makes the settlement more resistant to Truths that would cause starvation.



D20 MINOR EVENT: KITCHENS

1-6	A number of residents have reported suffering from illness after eating at the kitchen. Inspection of the place reveals it to be filthy and residents are calling for the head cook to be punished for being so careless.
7-13	The kitchen wishes to host a cooking competition and hopes that a member of the settlement's leadership can oversee the event. They wish to bring credibility to their competition, believing if they do they can make it a yearly celebration.
14- 20	The kitchen wishes to give out free food packets to those in need but, while they are capable of creating the food, they lack any sort of distribution network to allow for them to give it out.

IMPROVEMENT

NAME	QUEST SEED	REWARD
Local Delicacy	The head cook comes to the PCs and tells them of a recipe they wish to create, but need some exotic ingredients that aren't easy to come by. They ask the PCs if they can help them gather the uncommon ingredients for them.	Increase Community Spirit gained while recovering Community Spirit by +1

MARKET

REQUIREMENTS	TECH LEVEL	SCALE
—	1	5
BUILD TIME	RP COST	COIN COST
1 Month	5	3

Adding a market to the settlement allows residents to buy tools and equipment of rarity 2 or less.

D20 MINOR EVENT: MARKET

1-6

As the PCs are wandering the market, they discover a small crying child who claims to have lost their parents and asks for help in the form of coin. Further investigations reveals them to be a beggar and a pickpocket.

7-13

A small group of Grabbers has stopped by the market, offering rare goods that are not often seen in this region of Evera.

14- 20

A fight breaks out between a shopkeeper and a resident. The resident claims that the shopkeep sold them faulty goods while the shopkeep claims they did no such thing and this person is just trying to swindle them.

IMPROVEMENT

NAME	QUEST SEED	REWARD
Grabber Depot	While out on their travels, the PCs stumble across a Grabber trapped under rubble. They are seriously hurt, but if rescued they offer to sell their wares at the settlement. They also promise the occasional rare good to help repay the party for their help.	The first time this structure is rolled for an Event, the Grabber offers a rarity 4+ item to the PCs free of charge.



MEDICAL CENTER

REQUIREMENTS	TECH LEVEL	SCALE
Skilled NPCs	4	4
BUILD TIME	RP COST	COIN COST
2 Months	16	12

Adding a medical center to the settlement allows for residents to be healed of injuries, and allows for PCs to seek long-term medical care (*Gamemaster's Guide*, p. 171).

D20 MINOR EVENT: MEDICAL CENTER

1-6 The medical center is running dangerously low on many of the supplies it needs to heal the sick. The NPC who runs this structure believes that they can still hold out for a few more weeks, but will shortly after lose all ability to help people.

7-13 After a number of small medical items have been stolen from the facility, the medical center is holding an amnesty day during which residents can return the items free of judgment.

14- 20 The medical center is looking for volunteers to take part in a medical trial. They will have to spend some time being exposed to a known virus and will need to stay in one place. At the start of the trial, the center will establish a "clean slate", healing any injuries the volunteers are suffering from for free.



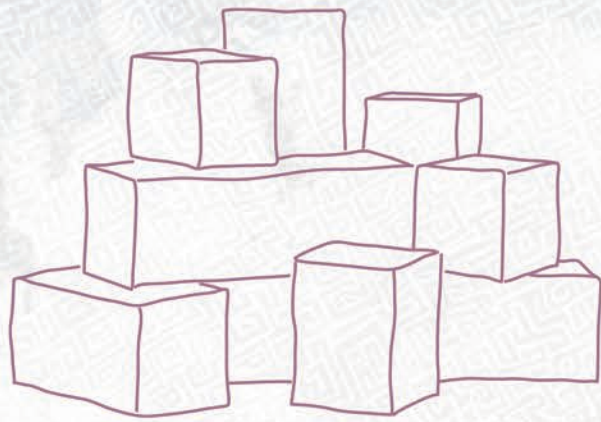
IMPROVEMENT

NAME	QUEST SEED	REWARD
Medical Automata	The NPC who leads this structure has uncovered the location of a medical robot. They require the PC to recover it from the ruins of an old city, but if all goes to plan they think it could really help with the running of the practice.	Decrease price of long-term medical care to 2 coin per day (<i>Gamemaster's Guide</i> , p. 171).

RESOURCE DEPOT

REQUIREMENTS	TECH LEVEL	SCALE
—	2	3
BUILD TIME	RP COST	COIN COST
2 Weeks	6	6

Resource depots are used by many cultures across Evera to gather and store large quantities of goods. Building a resource depot increases a settlement's maximum Resource Points by 3.



D20 MINOR EVENT: RESOURCE DEPOT

- 1-6 It is discovered that the resource depot has been broken into and several things have been stolen from it. Until the culprit is found, the settlement's maximum RP is reduced by 2.
- 7-13 While out gathering resources, the NPC that runs this structure finds a badly wounded wolf hunter (*Gamemaster's Guide*, p. 139) which they are now attempting to nurse back to health. While this is bringing them joy, it is proving a significant distraction. Add the *distracted gatherer* Truth to the settlement.
- 14- 20 While sorting through the resource depot, the NPC who runs this structure finds a particularly valuable material that is needed for construction. Decrease the Coin Cost of the next structure you build by 3 (to a minimum of 0).

IMPROVEMENT

NAME	QUEST SEED	REWARD
Further Gathering	The NPC in charge of the depot believes that expanding the settlement's gathering range will lead to greatly increased resource acquisition. Having chosen to ask forgiveness instead of permission, they have already moved forward with this plan and have caused a minor political incident between themselves and a nearby settlement or group.	This structure now increases the settlement's maximum Resource Points by 6 instead of 3.

RIVER DOCKS

REQUIREMENTS	TECH LEVEL	SCALE
Near water	1	2
BUILD TIME	RP COST	COIN COST
4 Days	2	3

Rivers are always so polite!

Adding a River docks to the settlement allows for residents to trade with Rivers and enables travel to and from the settlement by boat.

D20 MINOR EVENT: RIVER DOCKS

- 1-6 The docks are empty and have been for a while. The residents have discovered a blockage upstream that they have been unable to remove. Without a clear way to the settlement, the Rivers may never return.
- 7-13 Shouts go up through the settlement: someone has fallen from the docks! They cannot swim, and if someone does not save them, they will surely perish.
- 14- 20 A large River convoy arrives outside the settlement. An important leader is making their way down the waterway and has chosen this settlement as a stop in their journey.

IMPROVEMENT

NAME	QUEST SEED	REWARD
Retired River	One day, an elderly River appears at the docks. They wish to make their home in the surrounding waters and wanted to check in with the nearby settlements. They require nothing more than permission to sail the settlement's waters.	Travel along the waterway is free, provided that the River is traveling in that direction and is available.



WAYSTOP

REQUIREMENTS	TECH LEVEL	SCALE
—	2	4
BUILD TIME	RP COST	COIN COST
1 Month	8	6

A waystop can take many forms. It could be a simple lodging house or campsite, or could be something much larger like an inn. Building a waystop at your settlement allows for travelers to stop by the settlement and rest.



D20 MINOR EVENT: WAYSTOP

- 1 – 4 A visitor has paid for their stay with a rarity 5+ item. They did not leave a name, and only stayed one night. The owner of the waystop is reluctant to give up such a valuable item and does not seem overly concerned by its origin.
- 5 – 8 A visitor who has come to the waystop is interested in settling here, but would require a home (Complexity 2, Scale 2–3) in order to stay. Who the visitor is and what services they may offer are at the discretion of the GM.
- 9 – 12 An NPC well known to the party stops by the settlement, hoping to meet the PCs and discuss an important matter concerning their hometown.
- 13 – 16 A visitor to the waystop is refusing to pay and has begun squatting in their space. The owner does not want to have guards remove them, as they wish to prevent causing a scene and protect their image. They contact the settlement leadership hoping that they can help.
- 17 – 20 A particularly rowdy group of Spears are currently staying at the waystop. They offer anyone who can best their strongest fighter in a one-on-one fight massively reduced rates for their hire.

WEAPONSMITH

REQUIREMENTS	TECH LEVEL	SCALE
Skilled NPC	3	3
BUILD TIME	RP COST	COIN COST
1 Month	9	9

Adding a weaponsmith to the settlement allows its residents to buy handmade weapons of rarity 2 or lower, and also allows them to sell weapons and get them repaired, providing the owner is willing and able.

D20 MINOR EVENT: WEAPONSMITH

1-6

A deafening crack is heard throughout the settlement, It would seem the NPC who runs this structure has somehow managed to split their auto-anvil in two.

7-13

The owner of the weaponsmith comes to the PCs and tells them about a rich client that has hired them to create a particular weapon, but just before they completed it the client disappeared. The smith needs help to track their client down so they can deliver their product and get paid.

14- 20

Someone has sold the smith a particularly rare weapon, they are currently selling it to the highest bidder.



IMPROVEMENT

NAME	QUEST SEED	REWARD
Complex Machinery	The weaponsmith approaches the PCs, explaining to them that they have been learning to make more advanced weapons in their off time. Unfortunately, their current workshop lacks the required equipment to make this happen, but that could be addressed with the right Old World tech. They ask the PCs to travel to some Old World ruins and collect three items they need to improve their workshop.	The weaponsmith can sell Military weapons

CREATING YOUR OWN STRUCTURES

While we have provided a list of potential structures that players may wish to populate their budding settlements with, we understand that over the course of their adventures, players will come into contact with the varied and versatile communities of Evera Prime, and might decide that they want a particularly special structure inspired by one of those places. In addition to this, they might also have a special NPC companion who they want to build a specific sort of building for in order to accommodate them in their settlement.

As such, we have included some guidance below on designing and building your own structures for your settlement. The Structure Build Times Table provides guidance on how long a structure should take to build. These are supplemented by the Tech Level and Scale tables, which are designed to help you determine how large or complex a building should be.

STRUCTURE BUILD TIMES TABLE

	Tech Level 1	Tech Level 2	Tech Level 3	Tech Level 4	Tech Level 5
Scale 1	1 Day	4 Days	1 Week	2 Weeks	1 Month
Scale 2	4 Days	1 Week	2 Weeks	1 Month	1.5 Months
Scale 3	1 Week	2 Weeks	1 Month	1.5 Months	2 Months
Scale 4	2 Weeks	1 Month	1.5 Months	2 Months	4 Months
Scale 5	1 Month	1.5 Months	2 Months	4 Months	6 Months

TECH LEVEL DESCRIPTION

1	Structures made from simple materials that contain few moving parts (i.e. shed, park bench).
2	Structures made from simple materials that have some level of additional function, like heating or lighting (i.e. a basic warehouse or small dwelling).
3	Structures contain a few uncommon materials that have rudimentary electrical wiring or plumbing (i.e. a workshop or an inn).
4	Advanced structures built predominantly from uncommon materials, like metals, containing significant electrical systems and infrastructure (i.e. a specialist workshop or science facility).
5	Complex structures with multiple parts built with some rare materials that contain advanced and highly specialized tools that must be electrically powered (i.e. a specialist Archivist data repository; an advanced Weaver's workshop designed to support an Atoma).

SCALE	DESCRIPTION
1	Structures not much larger than a human (i.e. a park bench, lamp post, or tent).
2	Basic structures consisting of no more than a single room (i.e. a shed, hut, or simple bridge).
3	Single-storey structures containing multiple rooms (i.e. an inn, a basic workshop).
4	Two or three-storey structures that contain multiple rooms per floor (i.e. a specialist workshop, or a large storage building).
5	Expansive structures that contain many rooms or multiple wide open spaces (i.e. large warehouses, entire marketplaces, or long defensive walls).

SETTLEMENTS IN PLAY

This segment covers how to run a player-run settlement once it has been created, and how players are able to interact with it. It covers the concept of the Settlement Sequence, and how to make a player-run settlement more dynamic by using Settlement Events.

SETTLEMENT SEQUENCE

Each visit to a player-run settlement is composed of several scenes that come together to form the **Settlement Sequence**. Lasting as long as the narrative requires it to, the Settlement Sequence will cover any interesting moments and decisions that the PCs have to make over the course of their visit. Most Settlement Sequences play out as follows:

Arrival: The first scene in most Settlement Sequences follows the PCs' arrival at their settlement and explores what has changed since the last time they visited.

- **GM Preparation:** Before this scene, the GM generates a **Major Event** (p. 89) if the players have not visited the settlement in a long time.

Downtime: After arriving, players have a period of downtime where they can chat amongst themselves, check in with NPCs, go shopping, manage their settlement by beginning structures, or perform other activities not related to their adventuring. This downtime also provides

space for the GM to lay the foundations of later scenes that involve helping residents.

- **GM Preparation:** Before this scene, if a Major Event was not generated, the GMs generates a **Minor Event** (p. 88).

Help Residents (Optional): During their stay, the PCs may discover problems within the community that need their attention. A common way that PCs may help residents is by resolving **Minor Events**, or by engaging in a narrative scene implemented by the GM to help progress the story. While helping residents is optional, failing to meet the needs of settlement may cause problems for the players in the long run.

Further Downtime (Optional): This is a second opportunity for players to interact with NPCs or take part in any narrative scenes created by the GM.

Departure: The last scene in the Settlement Sequence, where the PCs leave the settlement and head off into the world, doing any last-minute shopping and saying any needed farewells. These scenes are usually quite short and flow into the first travel scene of their adventure.

Note that the Settlement Sequence should only take place once per visit. With the exception of arrival and departure, scenes that make up the Settlement Sequence can occur in any order suitable for the narrative.

SETTLEMENT EVENTS

Settlements in *Dreams and Machines* do not exist in a vacuum. They do not pause whilst their founders are away exploring and adventuring across Evera Prime. As such, whenever players return to their settlement, they will discover that certain things have happened whilst they had left. These are called **Settlement Events**, and they come in two types: **Major** and **Minor**.

MAJOR EVENTS

Major Events (p. 89) are uncommon and occur at the GM's discretion when the PCs have spent a considerable amount of time away from their settlement. It is up to the GM to decide how the Major Event plays out, and whether the players are present for the start of the event or have to deal with its aftermath on their return. Alternatively, at the cost of 3 Threat, the GM may initiate a Major Event in place of a Minor Event during the run of the Settlement Sequence. Note that Escalation and Disaster options still cost additional Threat.

Severity

Each Major Event has three tiers: a base tier that describes the event, then an Escalation that costs 2 Threat, and finally a Disaster that costs 6 Threat. These costs are cumulative, so if you wish to do a Disaster-level Major Event, it will cost a minimum of 8 Threat. As each tier builds on the last, it is recommended that you initially introduce the Major Event at its base tier before escalating it at a later date or during the Settlement Sequence.

MINOR EVENTS

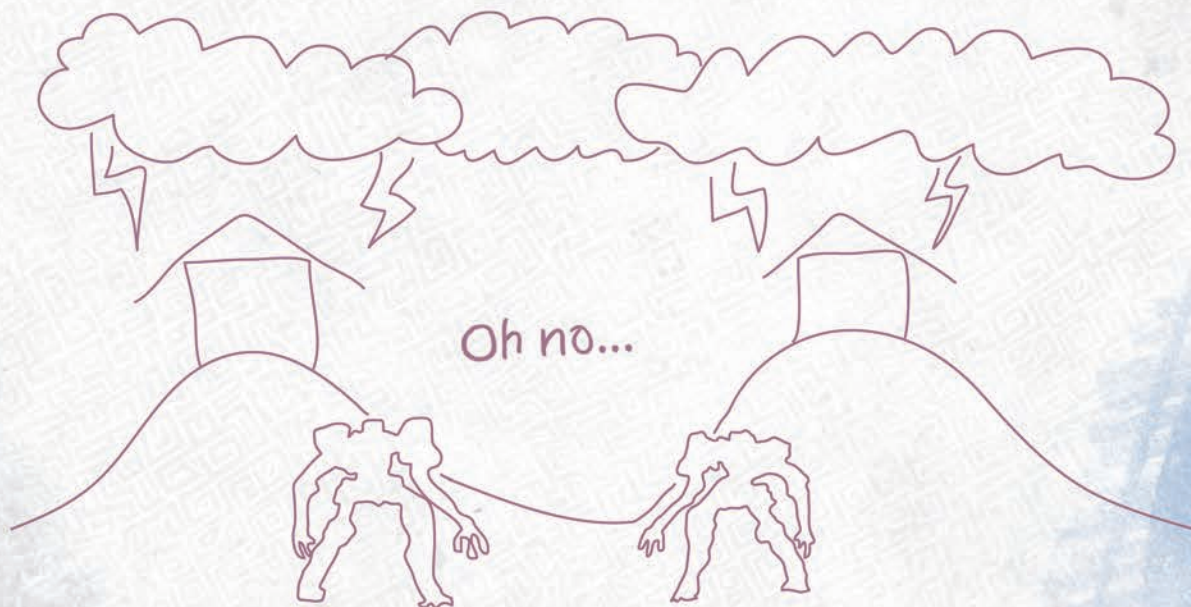
Minor Events focus on the daily life of the settlement's residents, and are used to add flavor to each settlement visit. These events will rarely have grander consequences for the narrative and tend to only affect the settlement itself. To generate a Minor Event, the GM must first determine the event's source, and then determine what happens using the selected structure's Minor Events Table.

1. Determine the Source

To determine a Minor Event's source, roll a d20 and find the appropriately marked cell in the Settlement Structures Table on the Settlement Sheet. If the cell contains a structure, that structure (or the NPC that inhabits it) becomes the source of the Minor Event. If the cell is empty, then all is well and the settlement does not experience a Minor Event, and instead regains 2 Spirit (p. 55).

2. Determine the Event

To generate a Minor Event for that structure, roll a d20 and compare the result to the previously rolled structure's Minor Events Table (which can be found under its entry in the structures list, pp. 72-85). Alternatively, you may choose to create your own event with a severity that is equal to the options already available that centers around the event's source.



MAJOR EVENTS TABLE

The below table is for use with Major Events. As the gamemaster, you are free to use these tables however you like, and are not required to use the prompts you do roll in your game if it doesn't fit the story you are trying to tell. Use them as guidelines if they do not thematically fit — or as inspiration for your own Major Events!

These Major Events are all narratively driven, and are intended to provide plot seeds to help GMs ensure that player-run settlements feel alive. There are no hard mechanical requirements, benefits, or penalties associated with rolling a particular Major Event. What effects each Major Event has upon a settlement's ability to function are left entirely to the GM to determine, as no two settlements will ever be the same.

D20	SETTLEMENT EVENT	ESCALATION (2 THREAT)	DISASTER (6 THREAT)
1 - 2	A sudden bout of poor weather strikes the settlement, forcing people to stay indoors as much as they can. Some try to pass the time by telling stories and playing games, while others stoutly refuse to stay inside, believing themselves capable of enduring "such trivial things". The only question now is how long will this last, and what will happen when people run out of things to do?	Several days pass and nothing has changed, the streets are empty and the people are restless. A small number of local dissidents have begun to stir up trouble, claiming that none of this would have happened if the settlement were better prepared to deal with this sort of thing. Their complaints might be ill-founded, but people are stressed and unhappy — who knows what will happen next?	The weather worsens suddenly and dramatically, and over the next few days the settlement experiences the most extreme weather many people have ever seen. Residents are left without homes, and the streets are littered with refuse and debris. Can the settlement be saved, and how will its residents have to rebuild after all that has happened here?
3 - 4	Nobody has seen one of the community's important NPCs for a few days. Nobody is too worried just yet, but somebody should check in on them and make sure all is well.	"Disappeared without a trace" is what the locals are saying. The vanishing NPC has become the talk of the settlement. What happened to them? Where are they? And most importantly, who will replace them? This decision must be made quickly, as in their absence things will begin to fall apart. So, who will be chosen, and will the NPC ever return?	Those that feared the worst find themselves in the unfortunate position of being right. The body of the NPC has been discovered and it looks like they were the victim of foul play. But who could possibly have wanted this person dead? A rival faction? A thief? Perhaps someone who coveted their position in the community?

D20	SETTLEMENT EVENT	ESCALATION (2 THREAT)	DISASTER (6 THREAT)
5 - 6	A strange, hooded figure has been spotted wandering the streets at night. Some think it's a Dark City Thrall on a scouting mission, while others claim it to be a Spear vigilante looking for trouble. But these are just theories — could it be something else entirely?	Soon after the figure arrives, strange geometric graffiti starts popping up all over town. Some believe it to be a group of kids playing on people's fear, but one resident has a different explanation: they think that it's a warning. These opinions are far from unanimous, however — what could others think?	The day after the sighting, a number of settlement residents are found dead in their homes. Panic grips the residents as they begin to speculate about who would do this and why.
7 - 8	The settlement is visited by traveling entertainers who carry a number of high tech items with them that they integrate into their performances. Most residents flock to see them, drawn in by such a spectacle, but not all react with such wonder. Some residents worry about Wakers and while the performers are quick to reassure them, can these outsiders really be trusted?	During the show, one of the items being used by the entertainers begins to spark and sputter, belching out smoke before erupting in flame. Time is of the essence and if nothing is done quickly the fire will undoubtedly spread. Residents scatter in all directions, some to help and others to hide. After all is done, and the fire is out, it's time for the real question: what to do with the performers?	The sky is bathed in a red light as a plasma cannon roars in the distance. It seems that those worried residents were not so foolish after all. A Waker has reactivated — but maybe, just maybe, it's not coming this way.
9 - 10	A team of adventurers visit the settlement in search of the PCs. They have heard of their exploits and wanted a chance to meet and work with them. They are exemplary guests, but one in their group is unlike the rest and is somewhat rude and standoffish. Could there be a reason for this behavior, or are they just having a bad day?	It seems your visitors are not just here to meet you after all, and are in fact being chased by something they desperately need help dealing with. None of the group give a straight answer as to why they are being chased but are at least willing to admit who is pursuing them: another group of adventurers!	The entire situation is a ruse! Both groups have been working together from the start to hunt down the PCs and put an end to them. The biggest question is why would someone do this? Is there something deeper going on here, or is it just petty revenge for some past grievance?

11 – 12

A group of renegade former Spears appear at the edge of town and threaten to draw Wakers towards the settlement unless they are paid a regular “protection” fee. People argue about whether or not to pay and if the former Spears are even able to make good on their threat.

The Spears return, this time asking not just for money but also for housing. They do not take no for an answer, and enter the settlement by force if necessary.

If allowed in, they attempt to set themselves as “royalty”, taking the best housing available and demanding those beneath them bring them anything they need. There are murmurs on the streets about rising up against these new oppressors, but other voices echo the former Spears’ threats from before. Action must be taken — but what course is right?

An intoxicated resident overhears the Spears talking in private and discovers that they are not working alone, and are sending the money they collect to some far-off settlement. They say that the Spears seemed nervous as they “hadn’t gotten enough coin yet”, stating “it’s them or us”. Maybe these are just the ramblings of a drunkard, or maybe there is something deeper going on here.

13 – 14

A group of settlers arrive in town, stopping for the night before moving on. They explain that they are off to found a new settlement, but have yet to find a good location. Their leader approaches the residents of the village asking if any of them wish to join the group, or can help them on their journey. Does anyone join them?

The following day, the settlers show no sign of moving, and begin setting up a collection of tents outside the settlement. Not everyone is happy with this development, but things are stable for the time being. Some residents think they must just be taking a rest, but some believe these settlers may have finally found their “good location”. Tensions are high, and folk are worried what will happen if they don’t move on.

The sudden increase in demand has thrown local resources and supply into chaos and residents are struggling to feed themselves. A small group of residents have banded together to try and find the new arrivals somewhere else to live, while another group campaigns for these new settlers to be welcomed to the settlement with open arms. The people are divided, and the situation continues to escalate dangerously.

15 – 16

Emissaries arrive in town, telling residents of a conflict that has beset their settlement. They claim they were suddenly attacked by a neighbor of theirs, and have no idea why this has happened. They ask for some resources to help them rebuild what has been damaged, promising to pay back in kind later.

The emissaries return, again asking for assistance. While it pains them to ask for more, the conflict has only grown worse so they are left with no choice. In addition to the resources, they ask if your settlement could possibly shelter and treat some of the wounded or unhoused members of their community. They claim it should only be for a short time but cannot give any certainty.

Times are perpetually dire, and the emissaries return once more. Desperate and with no one else to turn to, they ask if your settlement could join in their fight against the invaders. Their own militia is already dwindling and without the settlement's aid, it is certain they will be overrun. Do you provide military aid — endangering your own citizens — or do you choose otherwise and try to find another path to save the emissaries' home?

17 – 18

Electronics in the settlement begin to malfunction, and while most of the affected devices are small and have little effect on residents' daily lives, it is still a nuisance. So far, all attempts made to fix these items have failed, but maybe there is something that hasn't been tried that might yet work.

The malfunctions begin to spread, with larger and larger items beginning to exhibit strange behavior. The settlement is thrown into chaos as infrastructure begins to fail and people are forced to work without technological assistance. The settlement is divided, with some enjoying life without tech, and others wishing for things to return to how they once were.

The settlement becomes a Dreamer's paradise as all electronics within a mile of the place die. Archivists travel from nearby settlements to investigate, while Dreamers come to spread their message. Some worry that this is some long-lived plan of the Builder and that the town will soon face terrible danger. Fortunately, most do not share this worry and instead are spending their time investigating this phenomenon.

D20**SETTLEMENT EVENT****ESCALATION (2 THREAT)****DISASTER (6 THREAT)**

19 - 20

A small criminal network has popped up in the settlement, mostly committed to petty crime like pickpocketing. People now move through the settlement swiftly, keeping their eyes peeled for potential thieves. Unhappy with this, a small group of residents have gathered to raise the issue with the settlement's leadership. Who knows what plan they might have come up with?

The settlement's leadership is contacted by a nearby town, who are interested in forming an alliance. They send a diplomat, but while visiting they have an altercation with the small criminal network and are not best pleased. Having lost faith in your leadership, they quickly move to retract their offer – but maybe they could be convinced to change their mind?

The small outfit of criminals suddenly expands, the frequency and severity of their crimes rapidly increasing from the occasional missing item to full-blown muggings. Locals live in fear, paying much of their coin to the network in the hope of being ignored. People wonder how the network expanded so suddenly, and what can be done to save the community.



SETTLEMENT ARCHETYPES

Settlement archetypes are a new type of archetype introduced to *Dreams and Machines* in this setting guide. Settlement archetypes are designed to help you get the most out of your player-run settlement, and give you additional bonuses to running it. They do, however have some restrictions:

- In order to gain a settlement archetype, a PC must find a suitable teacher who already has experience in that area (i.e., Fionna Mowrie for the Leader archetype, or Wycliffe Quarles for Defender archetype, both can be found in New Mossgrove — or another suitable NPC of the GM's choosing).
- In order for a character to select a settlement archetype, they must pay the attached cost in **growth**.
- A settlement archetype cannot be the first archetype that a character gains. Therefore, they cannot be selected during character creation.
- Players can only select a settlement archetype if they have established at least one settlement.



SETTLEMENT ARCHETYPE: LEADER

There are many ways to lead a settlement: from the earned respect of village elders to the keen smarts of senior Archivists. It was not by chance that you were chosen to lead, and through hard work and dedication you have proved yourself capable. You have earned the residents' trust, now all you must do is prove their goodwill is not misplaced.

This is a **settlement archetype**, and cannot be selected until player-led settlements have been introduced into your game, or with the GM's permission. You must spend 3 **growth** to select this archetype.

- **Truth:** The character gains the *leader* Truth.
- **Settlement Spirit:** When you gain this archetype, your settlement's maximum Community Spirit increases by an amount equal to your Talk Skill.
- **Special Ability:** When you gain this archetype, choose either the **City Planner** or **Contingency Planner** Special Ability.

SPECIAL ABILITY: CITY PLANNER

While your settlement may never reach the heights of the cities of old, you can still implement some aspects of their construction at your home. Increase the settlement's maximum number of structures by 5 to a maximum of 20.

SPECIAL ABILITY: CONTINGENCY PLANNER

When you create a Truth that represents a plan of action to reach a community goal, or to prevent harm coming to your residents, you may spend 2 Spirit to make that plan easier to achieve. NPCs that make Tests relating to achieving this aim may reroll 1d20 for free.

REFINED ADDRESS [TALENT]

When making Tests to convince a leader of a community of a plan of action, you may decrease the Difficulty of the Test by 1 to a minimum of 0.

HEAD HELD HIGH [TALENT]

You have learned to carry yourself with an air of authority. Once per adventure, you may leverage this confidence to gain access to places or information normally unavailable to you. Though not inherently dangerous, this may be considered an escalating action at the GM's discretion.



SETTLEMENT ARCHETYPE: DEFENDER

You have taken a solemn vow to defend the residents of your settlement with your very life. As long as people live within the walls of your home, it is your solemn duty to care for their safety, never allowing them to come to harm under your watch.

This is a **settlement archetype**, and cannot be selected until player-led settlements have been introduced into your game, or with the gamemaster's permission. You must spend 3 growth to select this archetype.

- **Truth:** The character gains the *defender* Truth.
- **Settlement Spirit:** When you gain this archetype, the settlement you defend's maximum Community Spirit increases by an amount equal to your Fight Skill.
- **Special Ability:** When you gain this archetype, choose either the **For the People** or **We Fight Together** Special Ability.

SPECIAL ABILITY: FOR THE PEOPLE

This settlement is your home; its people are your family. Whenever you act in defense of your home, sharing a scene with its residents, you regain 2 Spirit at the start of each turn.

SPECIAL ABILITY: WE FIGHT TOGETHER

While you share a scene with any guards from your settlement and regain Spirit by adding to Threat using **Adrenaline Rush**, you may have a number of friendly guards equal to the Spirit recovered move up to one zone towards you.

NOT ON MY WATCH [TALENT]

The first time in a scene where Community Spirit would reach 0, if you are currently acting in defence of the settlement, you may pay 2 Spirit to have it drop to 1 instead.

LIFESAVING PRECAUTIONS [TALENT]

At the end of an action scene in your home community, each member of the community who was killed during that scene rolls 1d20. If they roll equal to or less than your Insight Skill, then they were saved by timely medical assistance, and are only injured rather than killed.

SETTLEMENT ARCHETYPE: QUARTERMASTER

While not as flashy as some other roles, there is a quiet pride held by many of Evera's resource gatherers, farmers, and other laborers. While you may not spend each day working the land or seeking out tech in the ruins of the Old World it is your job to look after those that do, and of the precious things they gather.

This is a **settlement archetype**, and cannot be selected until player-led settlements have been introduced into your game, or with the gamemaster's permission. You must spend 3 **growth** at character creation to select this archetype.

- **Truth:** The character gains the *quartermaster* Truth.
- **Settlement Resource:** When you gain this archetype, your settlement's maximum Resource Points increases by an amount equal to your Survive or Talk Skill.
- **Special Ability:** When you gain this archetype, choose either the **Expanded Stores** or **Efficient Construction** Special Ability.

SPECIAL ABILITY: EXPANDED STORES

Increase the settlements Maximum Resource Points by +5.

SPECIAL ABILITY: EFFICIENT CONSTRUCTION

Reduce the RP Cost of all structures by 2.

COMMON FOLK [TALENT]

You share an unspoken bond with the common folk of Evera. When you first meet an NPC who gathers resources for a living, decrease the Difficulty of social Tests taken when interacting with them by 1, to a minimum of 0.

IN THE KNOW [TALENT]

Whenever you enter a settlement or community you have not visited before (or has changed substantially since your last visit), you may ask the GM two questions about the settlement's main resources and what it produces as if using the **Obtain Information** Momentum spend.

SETTLEMENT ARCHETYPE: RESEARCHER

Researchers are often hailed as the brains of the operations. It is your responsibility to determine not only how to utilize new technologies inside your settlement, but also how to most optimally implement them.

This is a **settlement archetype**, and cannot be selected until player-led settlements have been introduced into your game, or with the gamemaster's permission. You must spend 3 **growth** at character creation to select this archetype.

- **Truth:** The character gains the *researcher* Truth.
- **Settlement Tech Level:** Your settlement gains a Tech Level equal to your Tech Level, unless your settlement's Tech Level is already higher.
- **Special Ability:** When you gain this archetype, choose either the **Automator** or **Applied Knowledge** Special Ability.

SPECIAL ABILITY: AUTOMATOR

When you begin building a structure in your settlement, you may increase its RP cost per construction day by 3. If you do, the structure's build time is reduced by a number of weeks equal to your Tech Level. A structure's build time cannot be reduced to more than half of its original value in this way.

SPECIAL ABILITY: APPLIED KNOWLEDGE

Reduce the Coin Cost of all structures with Tech Level of 4 or higher by half.

REVERSE ENGINEER [TALENT]

You may create a temporary version of any Hand-Made item by spending Supply Points equal to the item's normal cost. You may study any other item with a Tech Level lower than yours, taking a number of days equal to its Tech Level: once studied, you can create a temporary version of that item too, by spending Supply Points equal to the normal Cost +1. Temporary items are useful for one scene only.

SHARE KNOWLEDGE [TALENT]

While visiting a settlement that is friendly to you, you may ask the GM two questions about the world that you could learn from the services and facilities available at that settlement as if using the **Obtain Information** Momentum spend. For example, a library may give you information about the world's history or knowledge about far off locations, whereas a Dreamer greenhouse may give you information relating to advanced farming methods or food preservation.



RETIREMENT

When a character reaches their long-term goals, or when life's responsibilities catch up with them, they may choose to settle down and retire. This section explores some new retirement options available to characters.

SETTING THE SCENE

A good send-off is just as important as a good introduction, providing a moment that will live on well past the character's exit from the story. Regardless of how the character is retiring or what retirement option they are using, it's good to set up a dedicated scene where they say their goodbyes, perform any monologues, or otherwise interact with the other players.

RETIRING TO A SETTLEMENT

At the end of their adventures — or if a group of characters has reached a settlement's long-term goal (p. 66) — players may choose to retire their characters to a settlement they own. Should this happen, the PC becomes a friendly NPC, and while their relationship with the party will likely stay the same, a few things will change:

- **Archetype Mastery:** The retired character gains all the abilities and talents associated with the settlement archetype they had when retiring, or if they lacked one, a settlement archetype of their choice.
- **Community Bond:** Any character that shares a bond with the retired character replaces their existing bond with an NPC bond (p. 71) of their choice.
- **A Place to Live:** The retired character builds a structure for themselves in the settlement or takes over the running of an existing structure. This structure incurs no construction cost and is upgraded immediately upon its completion. The GM should consider this former PC's strengths and weaknesses, and what additional Truths they might bring to the structure and wider settlement. Providing that the GM is comfortable creating their own structures upgrades, the retired PC may also provide a unique upgrade to the building they reside in (for example, a character that was well-liked by the settlement before they retired may increase Community Spirit by 2 while they live there, or a character that was renowned for their military skill may increase the main attribute of all NPCs in the settlement's militia by 1).

CHARACTER CREATION OPTIONS

Retiring a character to a settlement also provides a number of additional character creation options, available to any character that spent considerable time in the settlement the retired character lives in.

Trained By: All you know was taught to you by a retired adventurer. While many of their lessons seemed strange, they provided indispensable knowledge.

Once per adventure, when you fail a Test that uses your teacher's highest Attribute or Skill, you may reroll all dice in your dice pool, as you remember a different approach you were once taught by your teacher.

Child Of: You do not simply know the retired adventurer — they are one of your parents. You carry the legacy of your parents with you and add the *child of [Name]* personal Truth to your character sheet.

Old friends of your parents are likely to greet you fondly, perhaps even providing aid free of charge. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of any of their old enemies, who will likely look upon you with distrust, suspicion — and possibly hatred.

Hero: Since you were young, you have looked up to the retired character, inspired by the tales of their adventures. Your long-term goal is to “become like my hero”.

You gain an additional short-term goal that describes a heroic moment you must fulfil. This action or deed is set by the GM or by the player who once played the character your character now aspires to be like. This heroic moment must be based on the retired NPC's legacy — for example, if they single-handedly brought down a Large Waker, your goal is to do the same — and when you achieve this goal, you regain 2 Spirit, gain 1 growth, and can be set a new heroic moment to try and achieve.

Inspired: You have been inspired by the retired character and have learned a portion of their skills.

During character creation, you may learn one talent from an archetype the retired character had, even if you lack that archetype yourself.

BECOMING AN ANTAGONIST

Instead of retiring peacefully, some characters may step away from the group due to personal grievances and animosity. Instead of giving up the adventuring lifestyle, these characters instead abandon their current companions to walk a darker path, transforming into an antagonistic NPC.

- **I Know How You Think:** Familiar with the inner workings and strategy of the group, this antagonist is far more dangerous than most. They gain a pool of personal Threat equal to the amount of Spirit they once had as a character, and gain the *Menacing* special ability (*Gamemaster's Guide*, p. 124).
- **Fixing Their Mistakes:** Defeating this antagonist forces players to confront a monster of their own making. When this enemy is defeated, each PC who took part in their defeat gains 3 growth.
- **Never Far:** Once per adventure, the GM may spend 5 points of Threat to introduce this NPC to the scene along with any of their allies.

People don't always
part on good terms...

EXAMPLE OUTPOST

NAME **Elemestra**

COMMUNITY SPIRIT POOL		TECH LEVEL	CURRENT RP	MAXIMUM RP
CURRENT	MAX	1	1	1
1	1			

SETTLEMENT TRUTHS	GOALS
Dark and shaded Underground Rocky Underlying Issue: Nano-geist Underlying Issue: Pervasive damp	SHORT-TERM Overcome the Outpost's Underlying Issues LONG-TERM

SETTLEMENT STRUCTURES				
1 Farm	2	3 Large cavern	4	5
NPC: Farmer Bert	NPC:	NPC:	NPC:	NPC:
6	7 Cave pool	8 Hunting lodge	9	10
NPC:	NPC:	NPC: Vessa	NPC:	NPC:
11	12	13	14	15
NPC:	NPC:	NPC:	NPC:	NPC:
16	17	18	19	20
NPC:	NPC:	NPC:	NPC:	NPC:

EXAMPLE VILLAGE

NAME	Elemestra Village
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COMMUNITY SPIRIT POOL	
CURRENT	MAX
3	6

TECH LEVEL
4

CURRENT RP	MAXIMUM RP
1	9

SETTLEMENT TRUTHS
Artificially lit Underground Friendly Nano-geist

GOALS
SHORT-TERM Repair damage to water filter
LONG-TERM Create a safe haven known to all those without somewhere else to go

SETTLEMENT STRUCTURES				
1 Farm	2 Mine Tour Booth	3 Large cavern	4 Weapons Smith	5 Dehumidifier
NPC: QM Bert & Robin	NPC: Nano-geist	NPC:	NPC:	NPC: Lam Phan
6	7 Water Filter	8 Hunting lodge	9 Floating Market	10
NPC:	NPC: pele	NPC: Vessa	NPC: Tenete Waven	NPC:
11 Lighting System	12	13	14	15
NPC: Rango Lelise	NPC:	NPC:	NPC:	NPC:
16	17	18	19 Under Construction: Waystop	20
NPC:	NPC:	NPC:	NPC:	NPC:



CHAPTER 5

EQUIPMENT, TALENTS, AND GLIFS

New stuff!

CAVALRY AND BEASTS OF BURDEN

Long before humans came to Evera Prime, people harnessed the use of animals to make lives and labor easier. While technological means largely eclipsed the use of work animals long ago, both the War and subsequent fear of machines resulted in a renaissance in the use of animals for travel and labor. Modern-day Dreamer communities make extensive use of animals for these purposes, while some groups of Spears and Conduits have revived ancient traditions of mounted warfare and ride to battle on the backs of beasts.



MOVEMENT

Typically, a mount doesn't allow for travel faster outside of combat than a character can manage on foot. While horses and similar beasts are faster than humans over relatively short distances, across long ranges their endurance doesn't surpass that of an average human adult. This is made worse if the beast is also pulling a cart, wagon, or other vehicle. For routine purposes, the utility of a mount or vehicle is more in carrying the weight of a rider and allowing travel at a reasonable pace, without undue exertion on the rider.

For crossing large distances quickly, a rider may need to change steed regularly. Riding at full pace for part of a journey is possible, but pushing a mount beyond that risks causing it harm from overexertion. When traveling long distances, a rider may attempt an **Insight (Survival)** Test, assisted by the mount's primary Attribute and Skill, in place of the rider's own **Might (Move)** Test; this normally has a Difficulty of 1, with the Difficulty increasing the longer the journey. Failure applies a *tired* Truth to the mount, which it cannot remove without a night's rest.

If you're using the **Hexploration** rules in the *Dreams and Machines GM's Toolkit*, then those rules already describe how to use mounts.



MOUNTED COMBAT

Mounted characters are fast and dangerous in combat. Mounts are typically Minor NPCs, which assist their rider's actions, representing cooperation between a skilled rider and a well-trained mount. In combat, a rider and mount act as one, with the mount responding to the rider's decisions and actions. Whenever the rider wishes to move, they do so using the mount. The rider benefits from any actions or special abilities the mount possesses which affect movement, such as **Swift** or **Charge**, and may pay to use those abilities by spending Momentum instead of Threat. When the rider succeeds at a melee attack, they may spend 2 Momentum to inflict an additional hit with the mount's attack.

Whenever a mounted character would be required to make a **Might (Move)** or **Quickness (Move)** Skill Test, the character may attempt an **Insight (Survival)** Test instead, with the mount rolling to assist using its own Attribute and Skill, so long as the mount would be able to move in that way (a horse cannot climb sheer cliffs, for example). Similarly, the mounted character may gain assistance from their mount on melee attacks and Skill Tests to notice or track creatures — the mount's bulk is an advantage in the former case, and its height and senses give advantages in the latter.

When a mounted character is attacked, the attack is assumed to target the mount, as the mount is larger. The attacker may spend 2 Momentum on the attack to target the rider instead. Whether the mount or the rider is hit, damage is inflicted normally, though the rider may spend their own Spirit to avoid Injury.

Should a mount be injured or otherwise incapacitated, the rider falls from the saddle, which inflicts a **Hard Fall 3 Injury**. The character is no longer mounted and falls prone near their mount.

Attacking with a ranged weapon while in motion on a mount increases the Difficulty by +1, but attacks with melee weapons are unmodified.

BEASTS OF BURDEN

Just as with riding beasts, a beast of burden pulling a cart, carriage, or wagon is more a way to travel without exhausting oneself than it is a way to cross distances quickly.

However, such vehicles often lack the top speed of a lone riding horse, as most of the beasts' strength is given to drawing the cart or wagon behind them. Instead, they provide a way to transport multiple people or large quantities of goods more easily.

As with mounted characters, when traveling long distances, driving or riding on a vehicle allows a character to ignore the normal effects of long or arduous travel — the animals pulling the vehicle must attempt Tests instead. As a team of animals sharing the burden drives a transport, they can continue for longer than a lone animal. Whenever an animal in a team attempts a Skill Test, each animal after the first adds a d20 to that Test, as if they were a group, all contributing to the task.

In combat or any other action scene, a vehicle-mounted character uses the mounted combat rules listed above. However, due to relative bulk and a lack of maneuverability, a vehicle increases the Difficulty of all Move Tests attempted by the driver, and the gamemaster should veto any Move Tests that should be impossible for the vehicle. Further, a mount with the Swift special ability may not use that ability while pulling a vehicle.

The vehicle itself has a profile of its own, using the normal vehicle rules. However, as an animal-drawn vehicle, it has a Speed of 0 on its own, and a Speed of 1 when being drawn by animals. A vehicle requires a number of animals to draw it equal to its Scale.

Melee attacks against an animal-drawn vehicle may attack the vehicle or one of the animals. Ranged attacks against an animal-drawn vehicle determine this randomly, hitting the vehicle on a d20 roll of 1-10, or hitting an animal on an 11-20; The attacker may spend 1 Momentum to choose instead of rolling.



MOUNTS, VEHICLES, AND RIDING EQUIPMENT

ITEM	CATEGORY	TECH LEVEL	COST	RARITY
Barg	Animal	-	6	4
Horse	Animal	-	4	2
Flat Top	Animal	-	6	3
Saddle and Harness	Hand-Made	1	2	2
Combat Saddle and Harness	Hand-Made	2	3	3
Stabling	Service	-	2 per day	2
Cart	Vehicle	1	4	2
Wagon	Vehicle	2	6	3

BARG

Large, mutated boars, Bargs are extraordinarily resilient and possess terrifying aggression and speed. They are high-impossible to tame, but some Conduit raiding parties have learned to control Bargs through the use of implants, and they make for brutally effective cavalry mounts.

Use the stats on page 133 of the *Gamemasters Guide*. A Barg is only sold by Conduit tamers.

CATEGORY	TECH LEVEL	
Animal	N/A	
SUPPLY POINT COST	COIN/SCARDS	RARITY
N/A	-16	6



HORSE

One of the most common riding animals, with numerous breeds used by Dreamers and Everan communities to fill different roles.

Use the stats on page 135 of the *Gamemasters Guide*.

CATEGORY	TECH LEVEL	
Animal	N/A	
SUPPLY POINT COST	COIN/SCARDS	RARITY
N/A	4/4	2

FLAT TOP

A hardy breed of mountain-dwelling goat with a hardened, solid crest over its head. They are aggressive if provoked, but are mainly valued for being sure-footed and hard-headed enough to traverse or shatter the obstacles in their path.

Use the stats on page 140 of the *Gamemasters Guide*.

CATEGORY	TECH LEVEL	
Animal	N/A	
SUPPLY POINT COST	COIN/SCARDS	RARITY
N/A	6/6	3

SADDLE AND HARNESS

Carefully made, and constructed for an individual type of animal, a saddle and harness are invaluable for riding and controlling a mount; while it is possible to ride 'bareback', a saddle and harness makes it considerably easier and more comfortable.

A saddle and harness fitted for a specific type of animal – a horse saddle is necessarily different to a flat top saddle – allows you to re-roll the mount's 1d20 without spending Spirit whenever it assists you on a Skill Test.

CATEGORY	TECH LEVEL	
Hand-Made	1	
SUPPLY POINT COST	COIN/SCARDS	RARITY
N/A	2/2	2

COMBAT SADDLE AND HARNESS

Combat saddles are heavier and more sturdy than ordinary riding saddles, intended to hold the rider more securely during battle. They are heavily padded, and use more advanced materials and construction, to allow the rider to remain seated and comfortable during frenetic movements without compromising their mobility.

A combat saddle and harness fitted for a specific type of animal – a horse saddle is necessarily different to a Flat Top or a Barg saddle – allows you to re-roll the mount's 1d20 without spending Spirit whenever it assists you on a Skill Test. Further, when you succeed at a melee attack while mounted, it only costs 1 Momentum rather than 2 to strike with the mount's melee attack.

CATEGORY	TECH LEVEL	
Hand-Made	2	
SUPPLY POINT COST	COIN/SCARDS	RARITY
N/A	3/3	3

STABLING

Shelter, care, food, and water for a single animal for a day.

CATEGORY		
Service		
COIN	SCARDS	RARITY
2 per animal per day	2 per animal per day	2

CART

A simple, wheeled platform, drawn by an animal to move large quantities of goods or a couple of passengers.

CART			
TECH LEVEL	COIN	RARITY	
1	4	2	
TRUTHS			SCALE
Simple Cart			1
PROTECTION	COVER	SPEED	PASSENGERS
1 (0)	Exposed	0	2
QUALITIES			
Cumbersome, Rugged			

WAGON

A large, wheeled platform, sometimes covered in canvas, drawn by a pair of animals to move large quantities of goods or several passengers.

WAGON			
TECH LEVEL	COIN	RARITY	
2	6	3	
TRUTHS			SCALE
Sturdy Wagon			2
PROTECTION	COVER	SPEED	PASSENGERS
2 (0)	Covered 1	0	6
QUALITIES			
Cumbersome, Rugged			

CONDUIT EQUIPMENT

SCARDS

As might be expected, Conduits do not participate in the economic systems of the surface-worlders. However, they are not without systems of trade themselves, as individual Nodes will commonly trade and barter with one another.

A common medium for this trade are Scards, a term that seems to derive from both 'shards' and 'discard'. These irregular metallic tokens represent a surplus from any technology, or other vital resources, retrieved for a Node, which are awarded to those who have served the Generator valiantly. Each token bears an intricate symbol electro-etched into the surface: each symbol denotes both value and Node of origin.

Originally, Conduits who had ventured to the surface were given unused fragments discarded from those spoils of war, but this quickly evolved into symbolic tokens, now referred to as Scards. These form the common currency amongst Conduits, and are accepted more-or-less equally between Nodes (though this can sometimes be affected by rivalries).

WEAPONS

NEW QUALITY: WIRE

Many Conduit Powered weapons have the *wire* quality. These weapons draw power from the wire wrap circuitry worn by Conduits. When used by any character lacking the **Wireclad** special ability, the weapon loses its Powered quality and will not function.

CONDUIT WEAPONS TABLE

NAME	RARITY	TECH LEVEL	TYPE	DAMAGE	QUALITIES
Arcbalest	4	3	Ranged	Shocked 5	Breaker, Heavy, Long Ranged, Powered (Break), Quiet, Wire
Barbed Javelins	3	1	Ranged	Bleeding 2	Quiet
Boxing Glove	5	4	Melee	Concussed 4	Powered (Breather), Wire
Conduit Electrosaber	4	3	Melee/ Ranged	Shocked 3	Burst, Powered (Breather), Scary, Wire
Conduit Electrospear	5	3	Melee/ Ranged	Shocked 4	Breaker, Powered (Breather), Scary, Wire
Gloom Bombs	4	2	Ranged	None	Ammo, Quiet
Magsling	4	3	Ranged	Bludgeoned 3	Powered (Breather), Quiet, Wire
Magsling (Blast) (3)	4	3	Ranged	Burned 4	Ammo, Breaker, Powered (Breather), Wire
Magsling (Tangle) (3)	4	3	Ranged	Entangled 4	Ammo, Non-Lethal, Powered (Breather), Quiet, Wire
Mono-Edge Spear	5	3	Melee	Impale 4	Breaker, Scary
Reader's Scepter	5	4	Ranged	Shocked 4	Breaker, Loud, Powered (Break), Wire
Shard Bombs	3	2	Ranged	Bleeding [x2] 2	Ammo, Burst, Loud
Throwing Blades	1	1	Ranged	Bleeding 1	Burst, Quiet



ARCBALEST

A large, cumbersome heavy crossbow that fires javelin-sized projectiles carrying an electrical charge, using a magnetic impellor. These bolts are propelled at such velocities that they can pierce even the hardened outer casing of some lighter Wakers, before violently dumping their charge into whatever they have struck. These weapons draw power from the wielder's wire wraps, and don't function when used by those who are not Conduits.

The profile for the Arcbalest can be found in the Conduit Weapons Table at the start of this section.

CATEGORY	TECH LEVEL	
Conduit	3	
SUPPLY POINT COST	SCARDS	RARITY
N/A	3	4

BARBED JAVELINS

One of the most common weapons used by Conduits, barbed javelins are simple shafts of wood, plastic, or lightweight metal alloy, with sharpened heads designed to fragment and leave painful, jagged barbs in the target. Barbed javelins are so ubiquitous amongst Conduit warriors that most can manufacture them from available supplies with little difficulty.

The profile for barbed javelins can be found in the Conduit Weapons Table at the start of this section. Barbed javelins are bought or made in batches of 3.

CATEGORY	TECH LEVEL	
Conduit	1	
SUPPLY POINT COST	SCARDS	RARITY
1	1	3



BOXING GLOVE

A crude but potent kinetic pulse emitter fitted to a glove, the 'boxing glove' is a euphemistic term based on pre-War sporting equipment that has stuck as the common name for this weapon. Whether mounted on the palm or the knuckles – and there are two competing opinions as to which is better – a single strike can stagger and stumble a victim and make them feel as if they've just slammed into a brick wall.

The profile for a boxing glove can be found in the Conduit Weapons Table at the start of this section.

CATEGORY	TECH LEVEL	
Conduit	4	
SUPPLY POINT COST	SCARDS	RARITY
N/A	4	5

CONDUIT ELECTROSABER

Similar in design to the electrospears used by both Conduits and Spears, the Electrosaber trades the long haft and armor-piercing capabilities for portability and speed, making it more efficient against groups of smaller foes rather than lumbering Wakers. They can discharge their power supply to enemies over a short distance, even arcing between nearby foes. Like most Conduit powered weapons, Electrosabers draw power from the wielder's wire wraps.

The profile for a Conduit Electrosaber can be found in the Conduit Weapons Table at the start of this section.

CATEGORY	TECH LEVEL	
Conduit	3	
SUPPLY POINT COST	SCARDS	RARITY
N/A	3	4

CONDUIT ELECTROSPEAR

Similar in design to the Electrospears used by Spears, the Conduit version draws power from the wielder's wire-wraps, and is able to project the electrical charge over a short distance rather than only into enemies struck.

The profile for a Conduit Electrospear can be found in the Conduit Weapons Table at the start of this section.

CATEGORY	TECH LEVEL	
Conduit	3	
SUPPLY POINT COST	SCARDS	RARITY
N/A	5	5

GLOOM BOMBS

These shells contain complex chemical mixtures that are known only to the artisans and weapon-makers of the Conduits. The recipe for this substance is said to be a secret passed down from the Generator. When the shell breaks and the chemical is exposed to air, it produces a dense, clinging fog that blocks light and radiation and creates a veil of inky darkness. The fog also leaves a chemical trace on those caught within it, which certain Conduit devices can detect.

Each bomb can only be used once. The profile for a gloom bomb can be found in the Conduit Weapons Table at the start of this section. They are normally produced in batches of three. When used, a gloom bomb fills a single zone with inky darkness, limiting vision into, out of, or through that area. The fog normally lingers for a single round; at the end of the round, each character within the cloud gains the gloom-touched Truth, which represents the chemical residue lingering on them.

CATEGORY	TECH LEVEL	
Conduit	2	
SUPPLY POINT COST	SCARDS	RARITY
N/A	4	4

MAGSLING

A blocky construction of metal and plastic, resembling an oversized, boxy rifle, a Magsling is essentially a high-powered magnetic slingshot used to propel a bullet made of a ferromagnetic alloy. It can propel the bullet at considerable speeds due to its construction and materials, allowing it to impact far harder than with a manual sling. As with normal slings, inventive users tend to replace the normal blunt projectiles with hollow shells containing explosives or chemicals.

Blast bullets are simple, impact-detonated explosives, intended to overcome armored targets. Tangle bullets contain an adhesive mixture that expands and hardens into tough, twisting tendrils when the bullet shatters on impact, ensnaring the target.

A Magsling has a basic profile for normal bullets, and then profiles for the special types, depending on which are being used, which can be found in the Conduit Weapons Table at the start of this section. Choose which type of bullet is being used before rolling for an attack. Bullets with the Ammo quality are limited in number with one shot consumed by each attack.

CATEGORY	TECH LEVEL	
Conduit	3	
SUPPLY POINT COST	SCARDS	RARITY
N/A	3	4

MONO-EDGE SPEAR

The long, hooked or barbed spears carried by Conduits are seldom found in the hands of anyone else. Many appear to be relatively crude, but they are composed of advanced alloys salvaged from pre-War storage depots, making them more durable and often more advanced than those produced by Spears. One of the advantages this gives them is the ability to hold a near-monomolecular edge that does not dull or chip, allowing them to cut and pierce all but the heaviest armor.

The profile for a Mono-Edge Spear can be found in the Conduit Weapons Table at the start of this section.

CATEGORY	TECH LEVEL	
Conduit	3	
SUPPLY POINT COST	SCARDS	RARITY
N/A	5	5

READER'S SCEPTER

Looking like an ornate, long-hafted mace, the staff of office passed from Reader to Reader is also a potent weapon, able to unleash an intense bolt of electricity – and a startling crack of thunder to accompany it. Yet, this is not the only use of the item: they can deliver an electrical charge remotely in less-destructive ways. While the weapon resembles a mace, they are not commonly wielded as such – that would be regarded as disrespectful.

The profile for a Reader's Scepter can be found in the Conduit Weapons Table at the start of this section. In addition to being used for attacks, a Reader Scepter can enhance certain talents: when using the **Spark-Blessing** talent, you may charge an item or restore Spirit to an ally within the same zone, not only one you're touching. The **Inductive Rebuke** talent applies to the Reader Scepter as well, even though it isn't a melee weapon.

CATEGORY	TECH LEVEL	
Conduit	4	
SUPPLY POINT COST	SCARDS	RARITY
N/A	5	5

SHARD BOMBS

These shells contain a potent high-explosive and are filled with shrapnel and jagged scraps of wire. The casing is scored and shaped to fragment into razor-sharp shards when the explosive detonates, inflicting vicious wounds upon enemies nearby.

Each bomb can only be used once. The profile for a shard bomb can be found in the Conduit Weapons table at the start of this section. They are normally produced in batches of three.

CATEGORY	TECH LEVEL	
Conduit	2	
SUPPLY POINT COST	SCARDS	RARITY
N/A	4	3

THROWING BLADES

These curved, razor-edged blades can be found in an assortment of esoteric shapes, each made to inflict different kinds of wounds or have differing aerodynamic properties. Young Conduit warriors train extensively to use these blades, hiding them in the concealing robes wrapped around their bodies to ensure that they have a weapon in case they're disarmed. Their small, light size and the Conduits' extensive training mean they are often thrown in a vicious flurry of blades.

The profile for throwing blades can be found in the Conduit Weapons table at the start of this section. If created with Supply Points, this produces enough blades for a single attack.

CATEGORY	TECH LEVEL	
Conduit	1	
SUPPLY POINT COST	SCARDS	RARITY
1	1	1

IMPLANTS

The equipment in this section is permanently implanted into the body of the user, and cannot be removed without either surgery or causing severe damage to the user's body. The technology is unique to Conduits, and the implants can only be implanted by a trained Conduit healer, and a Conduit may have no more than one implant.

ITEM	CATEGORY	TECH LEVEL	COST	RARITY
Alloyskin	Conduit	4	5	4
Burst Capacitor	Conduit	4	5	4
Cave Talons	Conduit	3	4	3
Diode Disc	Conduit	4	5	5
Gloom-Eyes	Conduit	4	5	4
Hunter Haptics	Conduit	4	5	5
Whisperspeaker	Conduit	5	6	5

ALLOYSKIN

Small polyalloy plates and bundles of flexwire are implanted into the recipient's skin, reinforcing them and rendering them resistant to harm.

The recipient of this implant increases any Protection they have by +2, and they halve their total Protection (round up) against attacks with the *Breaker* quality, regardless of what the worn armor normally does.

CATEGORY	TECH LEVEL	SCARDS	RARITY
Conduit	4	1	1

BURST CAPACITOR

Implanted near the base of the spine, this draws in and stores the charge in the recipient's wires and holds it to release in intense bursts. It also diverts some of that charge to stimulate the production of adrenaline in the user's body. This takes a toll on the user's body, so it cannot be used often.

The user may take the **Reduce Time** and **Follow-Up** Momentum options by spending 2 Spirit instead of spending Momentum. When the user uses **Follow-Up**, they ignore the normal +1 Difficulty.

CATEGORY	TECH LEVEL	SCARDS	RARITY
Conduit	4	5	1

CAVE TALONS

The user's hands have been implanted with slender metallic claws which emerge from their fingertips. These durable, curved claws are useful survival tools, and make for an effective back-up weapon in an emergency, but their greatest advantage is in their ability to allow the user to climb across obstacles and along tunnel walls, the sharp talons digging into surfaces that bare hands alone couldn't find purchase on.

The user reduces the difficulty of all skill tests to climb by 2, to a minimum of 0. In addition, the user always has a melee weapon which inflicts a *Lacerated 2* Injury and has the Quiet quality.

CATEGORY	TECH LEVEL	SCARDS	RARITY
Conduit	3	4	3

DIODE DISC

A strange technology implanted at the base of the skull, Diode Discs are a collection of micro-transceivers, compact kinetic batteries, and nanocircuitry of unknown origin. Nobody is entirely certain of how Diode Discs function, but they are vital to the function of a Reader in Conduit society. These implants pick up upon transmissions from the Generator, feeding the signals into the Reader's mind directly; their very thoughts are shaped by the Generator itself, giving them insights that they couldn't know otherwise.

Once per scene, the recipient may pay between 1-3 Threat to ask the GM for a hint about the current situation; the recipient will receive this hint as impulses from their Diode Disc implant. The GM is only required to give a vague answer, and they determine how much Threat the answer will cost – a small hint might only incur a cost of 1 Threat, but a much larger clue may cost up to 3.

CATEGORY	TECH LEVEL	SCARDS	RARITY
Conduit	4	5	5



GLOOM-EYES

The recipient's eyes have been replaced by complex optics that see into wavelengths that natural eyes do not, allowing them to pierce the gloom of the underground. However, these sensitive devices can overwhelm the recipient's optic nerves if exposed to the abundant stimuli of bright daylight.

The recipient ignores all Truths that represent poor lighting, darkness, or visual impediments such as smoke, dust, or fog. However, the recipient adds +1 to their complication range whenever they attempt a skill test while exposed to bright light (anything equivalent to bright daylight).

CATEGORY	TECH LEVEL	SCARDS	RARITY
Conduit	4	5	4

HUNTER HAPTICS

Connection ports are fitted to the recipient's body, linking their wire-wraps to their nervous system, and linking them to a spinal implant. This implant allows the wire wraps to generate a mild magnetic field, and picks up on disruptions in that field, acting as an additional sense, which the recipient perceives as physical sensations. Once the recipient learns to interpret those sensations, their spatial awareness improves dramatically.

The recipient may re-roll one d20 on all **Insight (Study)** Tests without spending Spirit, and reduces the difficulty of any tests to detect metallic objects or sources of electricity by 1, to a minimum of 0. Further, when the user defends themselves against an attack, and rolls their dice in a contest, they may spend 1 Spirit to gain an automatic success.

CATEGORY	TECH LEVEL	SCARDS	RARITY
Conduit	4	5	5

WHISPERSPEAKER IMPLANT

Worked into the recipient's throat and neck, this collection of sensors and transmitters allows a Conduit to speak to others with a whisperspeaker, never raising their voice above a whisper, yet their voice conveyed clear as if they were standing side-by-side. The range on these transmitters is short, but small groups of elite Conduits with whisperspeakers implanted can coordinate very effectively, and the transmission method is not easily picked up by Wakers.

The recipient may speak to any other character with a whisperspeaker (implant or collar) within 100m (in combat, this is sufficient to reach anyone on the battlefield).

CATEGORY	TECH LEVEL	SCARDS	RARITY
Conduit	5	6	5

ARMOR

Armor Qualities: Some types of armor may have other qualities. These will be described after all other details of the armor, but they are mainly descriptive tags which serve as prompts for the GM or hooks for other mechanics. Common qualities include:

- **Bulky:** The armor is heavy and can impede your movement. The GM may spend 1 Threat to add +1 Difficulty when you make **Quickness (Move)** Tests while wearing this armor.
- **Charge:** The armor is designed to batter through obstacles and foes alike. When you make a melee attack with this armor, if you moved before the attack, you may add 2 to Threat to have the attack inflict an additional Injury of the same type.
- **Camo:** The armor is covered with a camouflage layer that helps the wearer avoid being noticed. When you spend Spirit to re-roll a d20 on a Skill Test using the Stealth Skill, each point of Spirit spent allows you to re-roll two d20s instead of one.
- **Powered:** This functions as any other Powered item. When powered armor has been discharged, the armor gains the **Bulky** quality (above).
- **Handy:** The armor is covered in pockets, pouches, and attachment points for tools that make it especially useful. Your maximum Supplies is increased by +2 while wearing this armor.
- **Interface:** The armor is designed to connect to other technology, specifically vehicles. When you spend Spirit to re-roll a d20 on a Skill Test using the **Operate** skill, each point of Spirit spent allows you to re-roll two d20s rather than one.
- **Mobile:** The armor is designed to allow for maximum mobility. When you spend Spirit to re-roll a d20 on a Skill Test using the **Move** Skill, each point of Spirit spent allows you to re-roll two d20s rather than one.
- **Scary:** The armor is a sign that you are dangerous, and wearing it will affect how people react to you both in and out of combat.
- **Wire:** The armor is integrated into the wearer's wirewraps — it can only be used properly by characters with the Wireclad special ability. Without that ability, it loses any Qualities, and counts its Protection as 1 lower. Further, if the wearer has the Circuit Capacity talent, it may be used to pay for any armor qualities which cost Spirit or take effect when Spirit is spent.



CONDUIT ARMOR TABLE

NAME	TECH LEVEL	RARITY	COST	PROTECTION	PROTECTION (BREAKER)	QUALITIES
Reader's Vestments	4	5	5	3	2	Camo, Interface, Scary, Wire
Scavenger's Weave	1	3	3	1	0	Camo, Handy, Scary
Squadrunner's Mantle	4	4	4	4	2	Camo, Charge, Scary, Powered (Breather), Wire
Tunnel-Runner's Wraps	2	3	2	2	0	Camo, Mobile, Scary, Wire
Warrior's Harness	3	3	3	3	2	Camo, Scary, Wire

READER'S VESTMENTS

An elaborate set of robes and body wraps, inlaid with circuitry patterns, hidden impact padding, and connected to the wearer's elaborate wire-wraps. These are worn in conjunction with intricate applications of powdered moss, metal filings, and ash over exposed skin. Surface-dwellers cannot easily distinguish between different forms of Conduit garb, but any Conduit can read the complexity of the wire-wraps, the circuitry patterns, and the motifs daubed in moss and ash on their skin that the wearer is a Reader. The circuitry is more than decorative, however: a Reader can employ it to influence the operation of technology nearby.

Reader's Vestments are **Armor** which provides Protection of 3, which is halved (rounding up) by attacks with the *Breaker* keyword. Reader's Vestments have the *Camo*, *Interface*, *Scary*, and *Wire* qualities.

CATEGORY	TECH LEVEL	SCARDS	RARITY
Conduit	4	5	5

SCAVENGER'S WEAVE

The lightest and least elaborate form of Conduit garb, Scavenger's Weave is normally given to those Conduits carrying out their first mission to earn their wires. As with other forms of Conduit garb, it's accompanied by mixtures of ash, moss, and metal filings daubed on bare flesh. While it should be worn with a wire-wrap, it doesn't need to be connected to the wires, as many wearing this garb will not yet have earned the right to close the circuit of their wires. Scavenger's weave outfits invariably contain numerous additional hidden pockets and pouches where valuable resources can be stowed.

Scavenger's weave is **Protective Clothing** which provides Protection of 1, which is ignored by attacks with the *Breaker* keyword. Scavenger's Weave has the *Camo*, *Handy*, and *Scary* qualities.

CATEGORY	TECH LEVEL	SCARDS	RARITY
Conduit	1	3	3

SQUADRUNNER'S MANTLE

The robes and wirewraps of a Squadrunner's Mantle are woven amongst hard plates of scavenged polyalloy, servomotors, and kinetic capacitors according to Generator-given designs. While this adds bulk, the charge running through the wearer's wires turns this into an armored battle harness designed for maximum impact against the Conduits' enemies.

A Squadrunner's Mantle is **Armor** which provides Protection of 4, which is halved (round up) by attacks with the *Breaker* keyword. A Squadrunner's Mantle has the *Camo*, *Charge*, *Powered (Breather)*, *Scary*, and *Wire* qualities.

CATEGORY	TECH LEVEL	SCARDS	RARITY
Conduit	4	5	4

TUNNEL-RUNNER'S WRAPS

Intended for ease of movement, cunningly concealed support struts, muscle stimulators, and impact pads are hidden amongst the robes and wraps, and all are carefully wrapped to leave a minimum of trailing or loose clothing to ensure that there's nothing that can hinder the wearer's movement. Wearing Tunnel-Runner's Wraps, a Conduit can swiftly traverse difficult and dangerous terrain with ease. This garb is normally worn only by those who need maximum mobility and who can afford to sacrifice protection for it, such as advance scouts and messengers.

Tunnel-Runner's Wraps are **Protective Clothing** which provides Protection of 2, which is ignored by attacks with the *Breaker* keyword. Tunnel-Runner's Wraps have the *Camo*, *Mobile*, *Scary*, and *Wire* qualities.

CATEGORY	TECH LEVEL	SCARDS	RARITY
Conduit	2	3	3

WARRIOR'S HARNESS

Commonly worn by Conduit warriors and militia, a Warrior's Harness adds ceramic plates and polyalloy chainmail to the robes and wraps of a typical Conduit's garb, reinforcing it for battle.

Warrior's Harness is **Armor** which provides Protection of 3, which is halved (round up) by attacks with the *Breaker* keyword. Scavenger's weave has the *Camo*, *Scary*, and *Wire* qualities.

CATEGORY	TECH LEVEL	SCARDS	RARITY
Conduit	3	4	3

TALENTS

FIXER

GET THEM TALKING [TALENT]

You have always excelled at getting people to talk, no matter how dire the situation.

During a scene when you **Obtain Information**, you may direct a question at an NPC that can hear and understand you. In addition to spending any required Momentum, you make an **Insight (Talk)** Test contested by the NPC's **Resolve (Talk)**. If you succeed, the NPC will answer the question truthfully to the best of their ability, but will not give answers that directly endanger themselves or their allies.

NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT [TALENT]

Due to a mix of charm, confidence and feigned innocence, even the most suspicious of actions can seem mundane when coming from you.

Once per scene, when you take an action which escalates a situation, you may spend 1 Spirit instead of adding to Threat.

GATHERER

JUNKYARD ARTISTS [TALENT]

You have always seen the beauty in what people leave behind, and with skilled hands and a trained eye, you always know how to show its beauty to others.

By spending 1 Supply Point, you can create a nonfunctional facsimile of an object, creature, or person that you know well. Close inspection of the facsimile easily reveals it to be constructed of scrap, but from a distance its shape can be quite convincing. Attempts to realize that the facsimile isn't real, that originate from outside the zone the facsimile is in, require a Difficulty 2 **Insight (Study)** Test.

KNOW THE TRASH, KNOW THE MAN [TALENT]

A person's possessions often tell more truths about them than they realize. After a lifetime of sorting through people's junk, you know this well.

After spending five minutes looking over a character's personal items, you may ask the GM three questions about the person's history and life as if you were obtaining information. This may only be used outside of combat.



GRABBER

JUST KEEP RUNNING [TALENT]

A quick exit is one thing, but outrunning an angry Waker is another.

Outside of combat, you can move twice as far in a day than others without getting tired, and Tests involving moment ignore Difficulty increases from exhaustion and Truths relating to Injury.

PICK YOUR MOMENT [TALENT]

The best Grabbers know the secret to a successful mission is just as much about skill as it is timing.

Once per scene, you may add 2 points to the Threat Pool and select who goes next or starts the next round instead of the GM. You can't pick an ally if it should be an enemy who goes next, but you can choose *which* enemy.

GUARDIAN

BATTLE-SCARRED [TALENT]

You are covered in scars — reminders of battles won and lost. They mark you out as an experienced fighter, terrifying your enemies and inspiring comrades alike.

Untreated Injuries do not worsen during Bed rests. At the end of the Bed rest, you may spend up to 5 Spirit to reduce the damage rating of untreated Injuries you have by that amount, split between multiple Injuries if desired. Once the damage rating of an Injury reaches 0, the wound heals over with a scar gaining you the *battle-scarred* Truth.

RIGHT WHERE I WANT 'EM [TALENT]

After making a successful melee attack, you may spend an amount of Spirit equal to the number of Injuries your target can sustain. If you do, you may move them and yourself to anywhere in the same zone or an adjacent zone. This movement does not require the target to spend Threat to move over difficult terrain.

MEDIATOR

MENTOR [TALENT]

You have always believed that, with the right guidance, anyone is capable of greatness — a view that may have formed due to your mastery of teaching.

After a Bed rest, you can create a mentor bond with another character. A character with this bond may spend 2 Spirit once per scene to use one of your Skills in place of their own when making a Test, relying on your instruction and tutelage to guide them

LEVEL-HEADED [TALENT]

No matter how grave the situation, you are always able to put your worries aside and inspire confidence in your friends and allies.

You may spend 2 Spirit to ignore the negative effects of personal Truths relating to strong emotion until the end of the scene (i.e. *frightened*, or *confused*). You can share this benefit with your allies by spending a further 1 Spirit per ally affected. At the end of the scene, you gain the *stressed* or *bottling it up* Truth.

TECH

THE OL' RELIABLE [TALENT]

Wherever you are, and no matter what you have at hand, there is one thing that has never let you down: a prized invention or a simple nicknack that you have become fascinated with. Regardless of its exact specification, you know that you could put it together with nothing but a few screws and an energy cell — even blindfolded.

Select one item you possess, which has a Tech Level lower than yours, to become "The Ol' Reliable". Your default number of Supply Points decreases by 1, but if "The Ol' Reliable" is ever damaged or lost, you may repair or rebuild it by spending Supply Points equal to its Tech Level.

NEW GLIFS

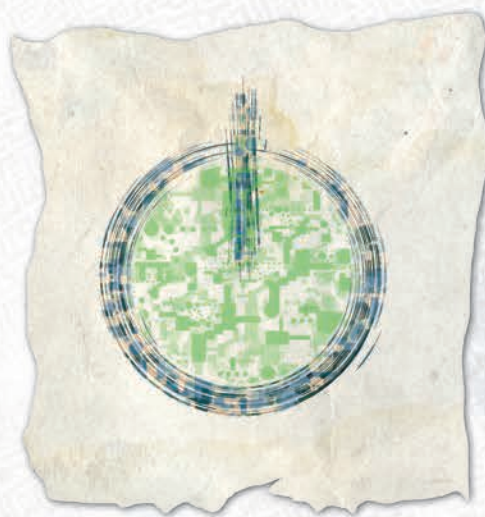
This section includes a selection of new GLIFs for characters to learn. These are lesser-known GLIFs, discovered through dangerous experimentation or through finding obscure technical manuals in the ruins of remote

labs and isolated factories. These GLIFs often come with risks or drawbacks in their use, and require some care and discretion to use effectively.

REST

Complexity: 1

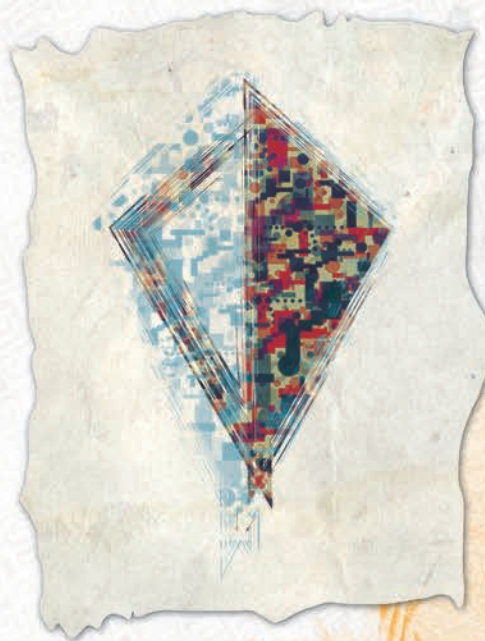
Upon seeing the GLIF, the machine will immediately cease all other actions and enter a brief dormancy to recover and recharge. For a number of actions equal to the number of Injuries it has suffered, the only actions it may take are actions related to self-repair systems, and at the end of this time, it immediately recharges all Powered items and weapons it possesses. If the machine is not damaged and all of its Powered items are charged, it will ignore this GLIF.



SENTRY

Complexity: 2

Upon seeing this GLIF, the machine will halt all movement and enter sentry mode, standing guard over the immediate vicinity. It will remain in the same location — though it can still turn on the spot to face other directions — and will attack any enemy it detects, but it must spend 2 Threat in order to leave Sentry mode and pursue. However, while in sentry mode, it may re-roll 1d20 on any Skill Test to detect hidden enemies.



RAMPAGE

Complexity: 2

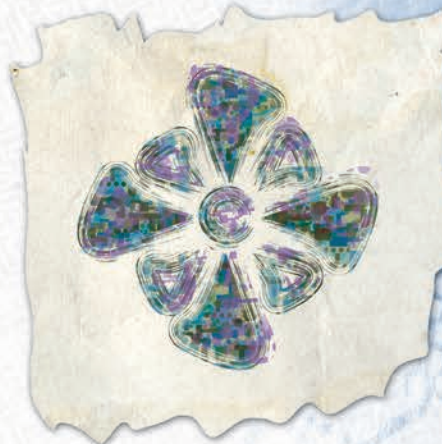
Upon seeing the GLIF, the machine will immediately enter a berserk state, moving towards the nearest target it can detect and attack them, friend or foe. While berserk, it cannot make ranged attacks or take any actions which are not moving towards a target or making a melee attack, but it may re-roll 1d20 on any Skill Test to make a melee attack. The machine remains in this state for the remainder of the scene, but it may spend Threat equal to the number of Injuries it has suffered +1 in order to end the berserk state.



VENT HEAT

Complexity: 3

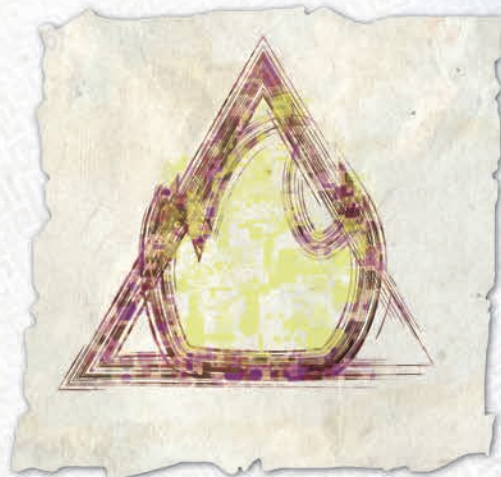
Upon seeing the GLIF, the machine's internal temperature sensors are overridden, telling it that its systems are on the verge of overheating. It diverts efforts to cooling itself and venting excess heat. On its next action, the machine adds +1 Difficulty to any Skill Test it attempts, and it cannot use any Powered items it possesses. However, after this action, it adds +1 to its Personal Threat, as cooler internal systems allow it to operate more efficiently.



OVERHEAT

Complexity: 2

Upon seeing the GLIF, the machine's temperature sensors are overridden, telling it that the internal temperature is low. It reduces cooling and thermoregulation temporarily as a result, tricking it into overheating. On its next action, the complication range of all the machine's Skill Test is increased by 3 (to 17-20), as overheating systems risk malfunctioning.





CHAPTER 6

EPILOGUE: SETTING OUT

What happens next...?!

The watchful Sentinel made leaving impossible for Kari and Abe. The man never slept when he was supposed to. When her parents went to bed, he woke up and watched Kari and Abe. She pretended to sleep, but she watched back in hopes that he'd nod off long enough to escape — but he never did. Even as she fought sleep, he was alert and armed with a number of items Kari didn't recognize.

She clutched the handful of food she had managed to hide from her meals — pieces of dried fruit, some nuts — knowing it wouldn't be enough. She had never been away from her home, and the walled garden that was her world, but she'd seen her parents prepare for grabbing trips. She needed water and food at the least. Clothes, tools, and a sleeping pack would make it much easier. There was no way to sneak any of that without leaving Abe, and leaving his side was too risky. Her parents could stop her from coming back to him, or the Sentinel could do something to him while she was gone.

There was only one thing to do — leave in the morning, unprepared. Outrunning the Sentinel on that speedy trailbike of his would be harder than outrunning her parents' rover. She wasn't sure how fast Abe could go, but she hoped it would be fast enough.





Her parents emerged from the house early in the morning. Her mother handed the Sentinel a meal and a drink and directed him inside while her father approached her with a similar spread. There was something different about his face that surprised Kari. He was sad. Since Abe came, he'd mostly been angry and determined to separate them.

"What is it, Dad?"

His voice was a whisper. "Not yet."

She didn't know what that meant, but her parents began weeding the garden. This wasn't a common chore for them, filling her with more curiosity. The Sentinel finished his meal and went inside to catch up on the sleep he didn't get. After a few more minutes, her parents dropped the charade. Kari barely processed what was happening as they pulled packs from the workshop and ran to her. Her mother was already crying. "You need to go now, Kari."

"You're letting me?" She caught the packs they threw to her. "Why?"

"They want you, too." Her dad shook his head. "I'm a fool for thinking you'd be safe. We mentioned you have a knack with machines. That, combined with your lack of fear for Abe, has convinced them you need monitoring."

A lump formed in Kari's throat. She worried all this time for Abe, never considering she could be in harm's way. "What would they do to me?"

"We're not finding out." Her father's eyes were steel. "You're leaving. You'll have to keep each other safe now."

Kari nodded. "Where do I go?"

"I've drawn up directions for you to find Zira. You remember her name from Gran's stories, right?" her mother asked.

"Zira, yes." Zira was Gran's friend, a savvy Grabber with a biting tongue and no fear. "She taught Gran how to manage in the ruins."

"Exactly. And she can teach you lots, too. Sorry we didn't show you sooner. We thought..." Her mother broke down in tears.

"We thought we'd have more time." Her dad teared up, which made Kari cry, too. She was so caught up in saving Abe she didn't consider what leaving her parents would mean. She might never see them again.

She climbed down from Abe and embraced them both. Then, getting back atop Abe, Kari directed him to leave through the opening in the garden wall where he once sat dormant.



The map and directions were the first thing in the pack. Kari hurriedly read them to see where to direct Abe. Zira wasn't close. Her mom's notes estimated four to five days' travel without a rover. Scanning the horizon, Kari oriented herself. The farm fields were wide open. It never bothered her before, but now she felt exposed. Anyone in the area could see Abe and report it.

"Can you be shorter?" she asked.

Abe beeped, lowering his stance. She could almost touch the long grains in the field.

"Head for that patch of trees."

His pace was not what Kari hoped it would be, but she was unsure if she should push. If he could run, it might make a loud pounding — that would draw attention. As they ventured further from her home, she spotted people in the fields. She didn't know them past being workers on neighboring farms. Some monitored their farm mechs, while others worked to harvest by hand. All eyed her in confusion.

Kari searched for some kind of reasonable explanation should anyone come over to ask: a new harvesting mech her parents got on their last grabber trip? But Abe was too big, and his arms didn't resemble any farming tools.

Instead of anyone coming towards her, they ran away once they made sense of what they saw. It dawned on Kari that neighbors could have heard rumors of Abe. They might have been told by the Sentinels to help them keep an eye out.

Kari strapped the supplies to herself and got a strong hold on Abe. "Run as fast as you can."

He stood to his full height and ran. The pace made Kari's hair whip around, and she bounced against the hard metal. It was as loud as she feared, but speed is her only hope now. They had to get as much distance as they could before her neighbors woke the Sentinel. She had to find a good place to hide until she could come up with a plan.

Once they were in a patch of trees, she consulted the map again. So much of the surrounding area was wide open. She needed a forest. Ruins. Mountains. Concealing Abe was a bigger problem than she imagined. "Abe, can your lights turn off?"

Beeps. The glow dimmed, but they weren't off.

"That's something, though." Kari looked him over. "Can they change color?"

His beeps went on longer than usual, as if he was trying to explain something. The colors only changed from blue to green and back to blue.





"I'm sorry, I don't know what any of that means, but go to green. Maybe you'll match the foliage better..." An idea hit her. She searched the packs, hoping her parents gave her more than just food and clothes. Sure enough, some of her paints were also within. "Perfect."

She mixed shades of green and slathered it all over Abe. With some branches lashed to his arms and legs, maybe this would work as camouflage. Then, she painted her own face, and after that she searched for duller brown or green clothes in the pack. Her mother was smart and had only packed those colors. After lashing on a bunch of branches, Kari directed Abe, "Head to the edge of the trees. Stay low."

She wished his footsteps could be quieter, but they got to the edge of the trees just the same. Peering out over the farmlands, she could tell something was amiss: no one had come back out to work. Then, the sound of a trailbike hit her ears — the Sentinel was on the search. Kari didn't know whether to run or wait until dark. A moving bush would stick out in the day, but Abe's lights would give them away at night. It didn't feel like she'd gotten very far. The Sentinels were smart — they would certainly look in this patch of trees.

Sure enough, the trailbike grew closer, louder, as it searched the area. Kari held her breath. All she could hope for was that her camouflage worked. The Sentinel passed by within fifty feet of them, but the bike didn't pause. The Sentinel jetted on to the next patch of trees in the distance, but Kari stayed still until she couldn't hear the whirring noise of another machine besides Abe.

"That was close." No one was out in the fields. She could only guess the Sentinel was checking for her quickly on the way to get the other Sentinels. Maybe that was why he didn't take much time. . "Okay, Abe, head for those other trees. Stay low and slow. I'll tell you to run if I see anything."

They crept out of the bushes. Kari hoped the grown fields would be enough to obscure them. The local farmers would see the makeshift bush-disguise as out of place, but Sentinels might not be familiar with the details of the area — there were many overgrown shrubs and trees between the fields. Moving so slowly made Kari's heart race, but so far there was no one.

Then, a siren blared in the distance.

Kari zeroed in on the direction to see if there was an army heading her way. The sound came from the village.

"Stay low, but move faster, Abe."

Abe picked up the pace until they reached the next thicket. The shade felt like a shield.

"Stop here," Kari said. "I'll check for the next set of trees."

For the next couple days, this hiding game repeated until Kari and Abe reached a much bigger forest. A few patrols came within sight, but they never got close enough to realize what was concealed in the bush. Kari continued following her mother's map, looking for the landmarks noted and, though she should be scared, she was thrilled to see what had only been described to her. As she passed it, she was tempted to see the town of New Mossgrove herself, but that would put Abe in danger. She had to content herself with the view of the distant, colorful sails and the eerie outline of the Waker the town was built around.

Once in the forests, the next few days' travel felt safer. While it was hard to tell directions at times, she hadn't seen a person or heard a Sentinel search party the whole time. After around three days, the forest parted and Kari found herself approaching the ruins her parents had spoken of. She looked out for Zira's place — she knew it should be nearby, but as the ruins grew ever closer, there was no sign of the pod leading to Zira's underground base.

According to the directions her parents had packed, it was supposed to be hidden by some ancient wreckage of no worth, but Kari saw only a desolate field leading up to towering, ominous buildings that far exceeded what her imagination conjured. They were haunting, reaching up to the sky like blocks stacked too high. Every now and then, a crashing, crumbling noise echoed through, as if the whole place might tumble over if one breathed too hard.

"Stop here, Abe." They were about to enter the ruins. Kari feared she'd missed Zira's place altogether. It couldn't be this close. There was a Waker, three times the size of Abe, standing frozen like a guard not three-hundred feet away. It didn't move, but Kari couldn't help thinking that it might. Given its size, it could crush her and Abe with little effort. She understood her parents' fear a little more.

"The bush ain't gonna protect you in there, little one."

It was a strong voice. A calm voice. Kari turned to see the owner was small, elderly, with gray hair slicked back into a puff of ponytail. The person held some kind of weapon Kari had never seen. It looked like lightning crackling at the end of a giant fork.

"Are you Zira?" Kari asked.

The person looked shocked. "You're not a Thrall? But the Waker..."

"Abe isn't a Waker. He's nice." Kari pulled off some of the branches and showed the glowing green lights. "What's a Thrall?"

"What in the...?" The person scanned Abe and Kari, sceptical but curious. "Who are you?"





"I'm Kari, and this is my friend, Abe. My parents are Geron and Taya — they said you'd be able to help me."

"Tanni's granddaughter! Yes! I'm Zira." The lightning fork dropped down, and the woman's face filled with excitement. "Sorry, dear, can't be too cautious around here."

"Tanni..." Kari had never heard someone call her Gran that. It clicked that it was a nickname from her Gran's longer name of Betanni, but it was strange, like Zira had known a completely different version of her Gran. "I'm running from Sentinels. They want to take Abe apart and take me away from my parents because they think I woke him up, but I didn't mean to if I did. I don't want him to be hurt."

"Whoa there, slow down. Let's do this out of sight. Come."

Kari followed the woman into a pile of rubble. Where she had seen no path, Zira revealed one. It was a tight fit for Abe at first, but it continually opened up until they were met by a large metal wall Kari had no words to explain. Her home was made of stone and wood, but Zira's was straight from the Old World. As far as Kari could tell, Zira lived *in* the ruins, not just *by* them.

Zira placed her hand on a black square. A giant door slid open where Kari hadn't realized there was one. It was big enough for Abe to get through if he squashed down. Kari had to climb off him and go first. Luckily, the interior was bigger than Kari expected. It's stretched on like a big barn with lots of open space. Zira had filled it with some furniture and living areas, but past that it looked like a bigger version of her parents' workshop.

"Don't touch anything," Zira said as she walked over to the area that seemed like a kitchen. "Do you like tea?"

"Yes." After days of barely remembering to eat or drink, the suggestion made Kari realize she was starving. She dug through her pack. "I can offer biscuits in return."

"Save them. You'll need 'em for your journey."

Kari frowned. She thought her journey was over, and Zira was already planning to kick her out. "I don't even know where to go past here."

"That's all right. With a mech like Abe, can't say anyone knows exactly where you'll end up." Zira looked over her shoulder as she boiled the water. "Still can't believe he's just sittin' there. Feels odd."

"He's been like this since he woke up." Kari explained the whole thing to Zira from the very beginning. They sipped tea and nibbled on wafers Zira set out. "So now I want to find out why he's like this. That way I can convince people not to destroy him."

Zira offered a smile. "You are so much like Tanni."

"What?"

"If she were still here, I bet your Gran would be right beside you trying to figure this out. She was always curious about the ancient times. Always talking about how machines weren't dangerous then — we used to work with Wakers all the time. That's just how she was." Zira looked sad. "All those years explorin', she was always looking for something that would fix it, you know? She always said there had to be clues."

Kari could remember some of this about her Gran. "She'd know what to do."

Zira shrugged. "Probably not. To my knowledge, nothing like Abe has ever surfaced. Even Archivists might have trouble. Like the ones you mentioned."

"I thought they'd be nice. They're supposed to like this stuff. They just wanted to take Abe apart to study him." Kari put a whole wafer in her mouth, munching it as she thought about the Archivist who suggested such an awful thing.

"Not every Archivist is like that, though," Zira offered. "There may be some at Padrol Tower who disagree with that one's assessment. They're always disagreeing, those Archivists, always trying to be smarter than one another. It might be worth a shot to go there and see. You'd just have to be wary about them wanting to steal Abe from you."

"Steal?" Kari looked to her friend, who sat nicely in his camouflage paint.

"Even if they don't take him apart, they might say you're not smart enough to have him. He's wasted on you. That sort of thing." Zira took Kari's hand, all seriousness. "So if you try to go there for information, you make sure you never leave his sight. Just like you have. They'll throw you right out and keep him."

Kari nodded. "He's my friend. They'll treat him like a Waker, not a friend."

"You're right about that." Zira poured herself more tea. "But they might know something useful to you, or at least somewhere else you could go for knowledge. So it might be worth it. Your call."

"My call." Kari straightened as she took in those words. The more she ventured out, the smaller she felt. But if she could remember she was in charge of herself and in charge of Abe, then it would be okay. Maybe. "Zira, you called me a Thrall first. What did that mean?"



"They're creatures that come up from the deep underground sometimes," Zira replied. "They were once similar to us long ago, but time and hardship have made them bitter. They don't like us surface-dwellers much from what anyone can tell. No one speaks their language, though, so I can't say for sure."

"I see." Kari had never heard of them. "My parents must have left that out. They've left out a lot of things."

"Well, I'd better help you out then, eh?" Zira smiled.

"Really?"

"You'll need to know as much as you can before I send you back out there. Hopefully the Sentinels will give us a few days at the very least, maybe more if you really threw them off the trail." She sized up Abe. "It's a decent paint job. I bet we have a week."

Kari lit up. "Teach me everything you can."

And Zira did.

She told Kari all about the people of Evera, who might be friendly and who to avoid. She showed Kari what Dreamer traps looked like and how to spot a place where Rivers docked their boats for trade. She warned Kari of the Spears and their swift skill in taking down Wakers.

After that, Zira taught Kari more about working with mechs and tech. She even helped repair her GLIF writer so that it could do three colors: blue, red, and yellow. But they didn't have time for more. About a week into Kari's stay, Zira spotted Sentinels with her surveillance equipment, so it was time for Kari to head out.

Zira plotted out the way to Padrol Tower for Kari, should she want to head there, and they said goodbye with a hug that felt like her Gran was back to wish her a safe journey.

As Kari set out from Zira's into the cold light of a new day, she felt the world open up before her. She had descended into Zira's underground home a frightened, scared girl, but had emerged with the tools — and the priceless knowledge — she needed to continue on her journey. As she gazed at the sunrise, leaving the ruins behind her, Kari spoke.

"Next stop, Padrol tower."

Abe bleeped in response, and began to march forwards.

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SETTLEMENT SHEET

NAME				
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COMMUNITY SPIRIT POOL		TECH LEVEL	CURRENT RP	MAXIMUM RP
CURRENT	MAX			

SETTLEMENT TRUTHS	GOALS
	SHORT-TERM
	LONG-TERM

SETTLEMENT STRUCTURES				
1	2	3	4	5
NPC:	NPC:	NPC:	NPC:	NPC:
6	7	8	9	10
NPC:	NPC:	NPC:	NPC:	NPC:
11	12	13	14	15
NPC:	NPC:	NPC:	NPC:	NPC:
16	17	18	19	20
NPC:	NPC:	NPC:	NPC:	NPC:

RESIDENTS							
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THE BROKEN STEPPES - SETTING GUIDE

Far to the south of the continent of Nedresita, beyond the temperate climates and beautiful landscapes of Regis-Kasteel and Pan Korbo, the sprawling tropics of Little Amazon, and the pristine waterfalls and shimmering rivers of Bella Lagos, lie the Broken Steppes.

An arid and forbidding wasteland of dust and secrets, the Surienta Simio region of the Broken Steppes is as inhospitable as it is barren. Marked with volcanoes and the ghostly ruins of the Old World, it is a savage and desolate place that all but the hardest of folk avoid.

But there are people who call the Broken Steppes their home. From the Flat Top-riding Spears of Highguard and the enterprising populations of Lotus Canyon, to the inhabitants of Trench City and the Conduits who live alongside some of the region's most dangerous predators, the natives of Surienta Simio have found ways to not only survive amidst the jagged peaks and harsh deserts, but to thrive.

But the world is changing. Coinduits – called "Thralls", and feared by most Everans – are being forced from their homes all across Evera Prime, bringing them ever closer to Everan communities. In addition to this, the Surienta Simio region does not rest easily. Deep beneath the surface of the earth, Evera Prime's seismic wrath is ever growing, and threatens to scourge the Broken Steppes clean with volcanic fury. Centuries ago, a group of researchers built the city of Trisagasimio to study this activity; what secrets – and dangers – could await there?

*All this and much more can be found within the pages of the **Broken Steppes Setting Guide**, the latest expansion for **Dreams and Machines**. With myriad new options for players to create vivid characters, as well as a trove of resources for gamemasters, this book is a must-have for anyone looking to further personalize their adventures on Evera Prime.*

This book contains:

- A complete overview of the Surienta Simio region of the Broken Steppes, including detailed location guides so you can seamlessly slot these places into your ongoing *Dreams and Machines* adventures.
- Brand-new character creation options so players can create their own unique Conduit characters, utilizing a selection of Conduit-specific talents and Advanced Archetypes to help you immerse them in their way of life.
- Conduit-themed locations to provide suitable backgrounds for new characters, or settings for adventures beyond the Broken Steppes.
- All-new rules and guidance for player-run settlements, enabling players to create their own bespoke communities filled with NPCs, allies, and services, and grow them into warm villages that act as hubs for downtime and roleplay opportunities.
- New GLIFs, talents, and equipment, including Conduit-specific gear and rules for harnessing some of the creatures of Evera Prime as ground mounts.
- Much, much more!

*Requires the **Dreams and Machines Player's Guide** and the **Dreams and Machines Gamemaster's Guide**.*

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